

Lebanon ready for talks with Israel

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon has completed preparations for resuming peace talks with Israel and will base its stand on a 1978 U.N. resolution ordering Israel to withdraw immediately and unconditionally from Lebanon. President Elias Hrawi said. The Lebanese army is ready to take over a border strip occupied by Israel and establish security when Israeli troops withdraw. Mr. Hrawi added in a dinner speech on Thursday published in Lebanese newspapers on Friday. "Lebanon has completed its files for negotiations on the liberation of our land in the south and the Bekaa Valley based on U.N. Security Council Resolution 425," he said. "The army and Lebanon's own forces are ready to impose sovereignty and security on the international frontiers." Mr. Hrawi added. Resolution 425 cited by Mr. Hrawi dates from Israel's first invasion of South Lebanon in 1978. Israel has consistently ignored it and former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was quoted as saying that for him the resolution no longer existed.

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King condolences to Ghanimeh family

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday delegated the director of information at the Royal Court, Ali Fazzaa, to condole the Abu Ghanimeh family over the death of Hassan Abu Ghanimeh. Mr. Abu Ghanimeh, an artist and movie critic, was a columnist at Al Ra'i daily, passed away at Monday of a heart attack.

Minister dies

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Jaber and Speaker of the House of Representatives Havel Srou on Friday mourned the death of Moussa Abu Al Ragheb, former minister and House member, who passed away on Friday. Mr. Abu Ragheb also served several senior government posts.

Saddam suffering from Hodgkin's disease

AMMAN (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is being treated by European cancer specialists in Baghdad for Hodgkin's disease, a cancer of the lymph system, Foreign Report, a newsletter of the authoritative Jane's Information Group, reported Friday. Foreign Report, citing unnamed Middle Eastern sources, said President Saddam had "a slightly faded appearance because of steroids he is having to take as a treatment, along with radiation therapy." The report described the disease as a treatable and usually non-lethal form of cancer.

Shirinovsky refused entry to France

AMMAN (AFP) — Russian ultranationalist leader Vladimir Shirinovsky was refused entry to France at Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport Friday because he did not have a visa, officials said. A foreign ministry spokesman said Mr. Shirinovsky only had a visa to attend a Council of Europe parliamentary session in Strasbourg, and a transit visa in Paris, but was not allowed out of the airport. Mr. Shirinovsky appeared Thursday before deputies in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in a debate which climaxed in Russia's conditional admission to the pan-European body. He was due to fly on to London from Paris, and from there to Singapore, French police said.

Eritrea expelling Yemeni ambassador

AMMAN (AFP) — Eritrea has demanded that Yemen recall its ambassador to Asmara as the two countries' dispute over a Red Sea island took a new twist, a Yemeni official said Friday. Yemen's ambassador to Eritrea, Ahmad Al Basha, is preparing to leave the country, the official said, asking not to be asked. "The Yemeni government will not ask for the departure of the Eritrean ambassador Ahmad Al Basha because we want to maintain diplomatic channels and avoid any escalation of the conflict," he added. Clashes erupted on Dec. 15 between the two countries over sovereignty of the volcanic island of Hanish Al Kabir which lies at the mouth of the Red Sea guarding access to busy shipping lanes. After a three-day battle in which nine soldiers were killed, the island was seized by Eritrean troops.

Indonesia: No problem with Israeli hope

AMMAN (R) — Indonesia said on Friday it would be willing to establish relations with Israel when problems in the Middle East were resolved. Indonesian Finance Minister Abraham Shohat said in New Delhi earlier on Friday he expected his country soon to establish formal ties with Indonesia and Malaysia.

Christopher optimistic over Israel-Syria talks

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Secretary of State Warren Christopher has told Prime Minister Shimon Peres he was "encouraged" by progress in the latest Israeli-Syrian negotiations, officials said Friday.

Mr. Christopher made the remark when he telephoned Mr. Peres on Friday to give him his impressions of the talks at Wye Plantation, Maryland, where he met the delegations on Thursday, the prime minister's office said.

However, the Israeli minister responsible for the peace process, Yossi Beilin, expressed doubts again on Friday about Syria's desire for peace.

"If the Syrians really want peace, I don't understand why they are dragging the negotiations out," he told state radio.

Interior Security Minister Moshe Shahal ruled out a withdrawal from the Golan Heights to the line of June 4, 1967 as Syria demands.

"We shall never agree to withdrawing to that line, for we would have to give up our water sources, accept a Syrian presence on the Sea of Galilee and give up the Hamat Gader settlement," he told a meeting in Tel Aviv.

Mr. Christopher is to return to the Middle East next month on another mission to

push forward the peace process.

Syria on Friday accused Israel of "seeking to abort" the talks held in Maryland to discuss security arrangements that would follow Israel's proposed withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

The official daily Al Baath said Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak's remarks in which he said keeping early warning stations in the Golan was of strategic benefit to Israel "dispersed all Israeli claims, that it was seeking peace."

Last year talks stopped for six months when Syria rejected an Israeli proposal to keep early warning stations in the strategic Golan after withdrawing its troops.

Both sides reported progress during their last round in Maryland in December.

The Syrian paper said Israel should stop "presenting impossible demands which they know are not acceptable."

"We went to Maryland seeking the peace of the international legitimacy. We did not go to bargain (away) our principles and abandon an atom of our land," it added.

Mr. Barak said Israel will make no concession to Syria over water rights on the Golan Heights.

"Israel has a vital need for the water which flows from the Golan and the Sea of Galilee, while Syria is a large country that has other sources of water," Mr. Barak said on Israeli radio in an interview from Washington.

The Sea of Galilee, a fresh water lake in northern Israel, provides 30 per cent of the country's water, according to Gideon Tzur, director of Israel's water agency.

"Any change in the supply of water from the Sea of Galilee would be a critical blow to Israel," Mr. Tzur said on the radio.

He said that Israel should over the long-term develop desalination plants to transform sea water into fresh water, or could import water from Turkey if the price was "competitive."

Mr. Barak said the Syrians would never reach the Sea of Galilee in any Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, in an interview published on Thursday.

"We do not want to see Syrian feet splashing in the waters of the Sea of Galilee," Mr. Barak told the Maariv daily.

Mr. Barak was referring to a Syrian demand that the Israeli army withdraw to the Golan line of before the June 1967 war, further than the

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Rotary International honours King and Queen

Rotary International on Friday presented His Majesty King Hussein with the Rotary International Special Award in appreciation of contribution to Middle East peace. The award was presented by a Rotary International delegation headed by Vice-President Richard Slager at an audience at the Royal Palace attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor. Rotary International also presented the Queen with an award in appreciation of her



Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor on Friday receive Rotary International Vice-President Richard Slager and his wife (Petra photo)

contribution to social development and mother and child care services. Mr. Slager arrived here early

Friday as part of a regional visit and leaves Saturday for Cairo. The audience was attended by Royal Court

Chief Marwan Al Qasem and Rotary International District Governor Tawfiq Kassar.

9 killed in accidents

AMMAN (J.T.) — Six people were killed in a car accident involving a pickup truck and a lorry in Al Azraq area, according to police officials. The officials said three of the victims were children. The names of the victims and details of the accident were not immediately available.

A 35-year-old woman and her 10-year-old daughter were killed Friday in a fire that destroyed their house in the town of Sakeb, near Jerash, police said. A police report attributed the fire to gas leakage. It said

the house owner, Abdul Karim Mohammad Ayyash, sustained burns to his feet and hands.

In Amman, a 23-year-old man died when he fell from a high place at Amman International Stadium during a soccer match between Al Wihdat and Al Qadisiyyah teams, a Civil Defence Department (CDD) report said. The report, identifying the deceased as Mahmoud Salah Al Keilani, 23, said the man was pronounced dead on arrival at the University of Jordan hospital.

Arafat due here today for post-election talks

AMMAN (Agencies) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat arrives here today at the start of a tour that will later take him to Egypt and Europe.

A Palestinian source was quoted by Agence France Presse as saying that during the trip, the first since the Jan. 20 Palestinian elections, Mr. Arafat will discuss with His Majesty King Hussein and later with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak pan-Arab issues and matters of common interest.

President Arafat's visit to Amman comes on the heels of a trip to Gaza by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti for the formal inauguration of the Jordanian representation office there on Thursday.

Mr. Kabariti who returned to Amman Thursday evening held talks with President Arafat, who lauded the Jordanian position and voiced appreciation and gratitude to King Hussein for Jordanian support for the Palestinian people, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

Addressing a joint press conference with Mr. Kabariti, Mr. Arafat said he was grateful to the King for supporting the Palestinian elections and for Jordan's continued support for the Palestinian stand, expressing hope that the coming stage will witness further Jordanian-Palestinian cohesion.

Mr. Kabariti said that he carried a message of greetings to President Arafat and congratulations on the outcome of the Palestinian elections. Mr. Kabariti reiterated Jordanian support for the establishment of a Palestinian state and said any subsequent confederation with Jordan would have to be decided in a

King receives cable of thanks

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Friday received a cable from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat thanking him for the congratulations the King sent to him for his victory in Palestinian self-rule presidential election. Mr. Arafat stressed the need to further develop Jordanian-Palestinian relations and thanked the King for his support of the Palestinian people and Middle East peacekeeping. Mr. Arafat wished the King good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

referendum in both countries.

"We are very honoured to have the president come with us to celebrate the opening of our mission here to the Palestinian state in Gaza," Mr. Kabariti said at a ceremony.

Jordan has welcomed Mr. Arafat's victory in last Saturday's Palestinian elections in which he was chosen overwhelmingly as Palestinian president.

Mr. Kabariti, asked by reporters about a 1983 decision by the Palestinian parliament-in-exile to establish a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, said such an alliance was a sensitive issue. "The Palestinian people should enjoy their rights to their land and be able to exercise completely their sovereignty through the establishment of a state... then there will be an opportunity for a referendum between the two peoples," he

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160,000 perform prayers in East Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — More than 160,000 Palestinians flocked to Jerusalem for the first Friday prayers of Ramadan, with 30 Jewish extremists being turned away by Israeli security forces deployed to prevent trouble.

The prayers passed off without incident after a major security operation, which included closing off Jerusalem to Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and West Bank and deploying extra police in the Old City.

Police chief Asaf Hefetz said the measures were to "protect Muslims who had

come to pray." The army said it was on alert against possible attack by the Hamas group.

Police turned back around 30 Jewish right-wingers who tried to enter the Haram Al Sharif complex, Islam's third holiest site with its golden Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa mosque.

"Only God knows when the day will come when we can pray without the Israeli soldiers on our back," said Tawfiq Omar, 37, who came from Ramallah on the West Bank for the prayers.

Darwish Ahmad, 40, said the large presence of Israeli soldiers was "a provocation and had nothing to do with security."

Police, deployed in an operation dubbed "Ramadan 96," closed roads to vehicles in several areas of East Jerusalem and stepped up identity checks of Palestinians.

"These followers have come here to say (to Israel) that there will be neither peace nor stability without the return of Jerusalem to the Palestinians, the symbol of Muslim faith," the imam of Friday's prayers

said. Several followers waited outside overnight so that they could pray inside the mosque. Scouts were deployed to maintain order and direct the women towards the Dome of the Rock and the men to Al Aqsa mosque.

"There will not be peace without the return of refugees, there will not be peace without the end to the confiscation of Palestinian lands, there will not be a peace without the release of all Palestinian prisoners," the imam said.

"We wait impatiently for the day when the Al Aqsa

mosque will be free from the grip of occupation," he added.

Hamas has threatened to seek revenge for the murder on Jan. 5 of their master bomb-maker Yahya Ayyash, who died when his mobile phone blew up in his hand in the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian National Authority and Hamas have accused Israel's security agency Shin Bet of being behind the assassination, which Israel has neither confirmed nor denied.

The Ibrahim mosque in Hebron was also closed off to Jews on Friday.

One-third of Israelis support Palestinian state, survey finds

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — More than one third of Israelis support the creation of a Palestinian state along their borders, according to a Gallup poll published on Friday.

The poll indicated that 38.5 per cent of Israelis support the establishment of a Palestinian state, while 48.3 per cent are opposed and 13.2 per cent had no opinion.

A large majority of Israelis, 59.2 per cent, support the autonomy accords signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), compared to 23.8 per cent who are opposed and 17 per cent with no opinion, according to the poll, published by the Maariv newspaper.

Also, 38.2 per cent of Israelis said the Palestinian self-rule elections on Jan. 20 had strengthened their support for the autonomy accords.

The newly elected Palestinian president, Yasser Arafat, says he will make the creation of an independent state his priority.

The poll also showed that if elections due to take place in Israel in later October were held now, Prime Minister Shimon Peres of the Labour Party would decisively win over Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the main opposition conservative

Likud Party.

In the forthcoming elections, Israelis are for the first time to directly elect the prime minister as well as members of parliament.

Mr. Peres was supported by 52.6 per cent of Israelis for prime minister compared to 32.7 per cent for Mr. Netanyahu, and 14.7 per cent who expressed no opinion.

The poll was taken on Wednesday among 521 Israelis, with a four per cent margin of error.

Informal talks on Jerusalem

Palestinians and Israelis have been holding informal talks about the future status of Jerusalem ahead of scheduled negotiations in May, a senior Palestinian leader said Friday.

Faisal Husseini, who handles Jerusalem affairs for the Palestinian National Authority, said the talks are aimed at ensuring the success of formal negotiations due to begin in May according to the Oslo agreement on self-rule.

"They involve academics. The idea is to come up with more than one scenario for the solution," he said. "Then when the negotiations start, there will be more than one scenario to work with."

The meetings have also involved "people who were

ministers," according to Ziyad Abu Zayyad, a newly elected member of the Palestinian self-rule council who participated in some of them. He said they were being held in Jerusalem and abroad.

According to the Oslo agreement, arrangements for Jerusalem, refugee issues and the fate of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are to be determined in final status talks. The three are among the thorniest issues in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The contacts, Mr. Husseini said, are taking place "calmly and without the media. They are not negotiations, they are preparations and involve listening."

Mr. Husseini declined to answer whether he was personally involved in them, saying only: "I hope someone is working on it."

"They are preparing for the final status, exploring possibilities and options," Mr. Abu Zayyad said. "There was a positive spirit in these meetings."

An Israeli foreign ministry said: "We don't know about any such talks. If there are informal talks it may be a possibility, but we would not have to know. They are not official, and are not binding on anyone."

Israel is hunting 39 Palestinians — Zvili

PARIS (R) — A top official of Prime Minister Shimon Peres' party on Friday defended the killing of Palestinian bomb-maker Yahya Ayyash and said Israel's secret services were hunting for 39 other wanted Palestinians.

Nissim Zvili, general secretary of the Israel Labour Party, told reporters on a visit to France: "There are people among the Palestinians who are wanted by the (security) services and even though our army has withdrawn (from much of the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank), we cannot take too many risks."

Ayyash, the "engineer" believed to be behind a campaign of suicide bombings inside Israel in which up to 60 people were killed, was blown up by a booby-trapped cellular telephone in a Gaza refugee camp earlier this month.

"If you wait until a terrorist is already driving his (booby-trapped car or has got on the bus, it's too late," Mr. Zvili said. "That is why the role of the services is not over, and any Palestinian terrorist wanted by the services remains wanted."

"They had been looking for the 'engineer' for several years without success. I know they worked very hard on that. There sometimes you get lucky," Mr. Zvili said. "The list is not too long. It used to be 127 people, today

it's 39. We know that 17 of those 39 are in Jericho, and I don't see the Palestinian Authority, despite the accords they signed with us, handing over terrorists to the Israeli services. That's why the services continue their independent activity," he said.

Mr. Zvili said he did not mean that he expected all 39 wanted Palestinians to be eliminated physically.

"In my view, there are a few among them who are hunted with greater ardour, and some with less. There are those to whom we can turn a blind eye, and there are still a few who are really wanted," he said.

The Labour official said all members of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) would be granted immunity from pursuit or prosecution in the autonomous Palestinian territories.

Israel agreed this week to allow them to return permanently as part of the conditions for the PNC to amend its charter, as Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has promised, removing clauses calling for the destruction of the Jewish state.

Mr. Zvili said it was not certain that there would be the necessary two-thirds majority in the PNC to change the charter, but the Labour Party insisted that Israel should not open negotiations on the final status of the territories until it was amended.

ROYAL JORDANIAN Announcement

Royal Jordanian has the pleasure to announce the introduction of a new service the "Advance Boarding Pass" at its Intercon. Housing Bank and Abdali offices. It is also available at its offices in Zarka and Irbid.

This "ABP" service allows RJ passengers to receive their Boarding Passes, seat assignments and pay their Airport Tax at RJ offices within (24) hours and until (3) hours prior to departure time.

This service applies to the following destinations: New York, Chicago, London, Berlin, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.

U.S. engaged in economic moves parallel to peace

SEVILLE (USIA) — U.S. Ambassador to Spain Richard N. Gardner described the foreign policy of the Clinton administration on Thursday in the lecture series "Encounters 2000" in Seville.

In his address, the ambassador covered the priority areas of European security, international trade, non-proliferation, Middle East Peace Process, Yugoslavia, sustainable development and the United Nations, saying that, in his view, "there is sufficient bipartisan consensus in Congress that the broad thrust of American policy in the first four areas will not change."

On peace in the Middle East, he said:

"The world has witnessed a profound transformation in the landscape of the Arab-Israeli conflict — one that would not have been imaginable just a few years ago. The peace process launched here in Madrid has experienced remarkable success, most recently in the signing in Washington of a second agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. It is an honour to have the prime minister of Spain, in his capacity as president of the European Union present to sign as a witness to this historic event. The road toward a stable peace in the Middle East has taken an important turn."

"The cold-blooded assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has underscored the enormous challenges that confront those striving to construct a peaceful and stable Middle East. We are heartened that the assassin's bullets have not deterred those striving for peace: Israeli withdrawal from West Bank towns continues on schedule, and last week Palestinians for the first time voted for their own leaders. There remain numerous daunting political, economic and social challenges in the region. But positive developments are changing the face of the Middle East. We need to maintain our support for the courageous decisions of the leaders committed to bringing an end to the generations of conflict in the region."

"In conjunction with this

political task, the United States is actively engaged with its European partners and the countries of the region in promoting economic inter-change and prosperity among the partners to the peace process, as well as their Mediterranean neighbours. In a major international undertaking, the United States and the EU and other donors are working with the World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund) to rationalise and coordinate an assistance programme to the Palestinians.

"Additionally, the effort to attract private sector involvement in the development of the Middle East and North Africa, begun in Casablanca in October 1994, is moving forward nicely. A second economic summit, held in Amman, Jordan, this past October, was the result of close coordination between the United States, Europe, and the countries of the region. The Amman summit brought together scores of business and government leaders. It resulted in the creation of several important vehicles for economic development: A regional Tourism Board, a Business Council, and a Middle East Development Bank.

"As the main track of the peace process moves forward, there remain the enemies of peace. Unanswered questions about the nuclear and chemical weapons capabilities of Iraq, as well as Saddam Hussein's continued defiance for U.N. sanctions, continue to threaten regional security. Full compliance with all relevant U.N. obligations is the only possible basis on which to consider any relaxation of sanctions. Equally ominous, Iran now leads rejectionist attempts to kill the chances for peace, sows terror and subversion across the Arab World, and is engaged in a crash effort to develop nuclear weapons. For this reason, President Clinton announced a total U.S. trade embargo against Iran. Those industrialised countries that provide concessional credits to Iran make it easier for Iran to use its own resources to sponsor terrorism and undermine the prospects for peace."

Outspoken Moroccan minister is sacked

RABAT (R) — King Hassan of Morocco removed the outspoken minister of human rights, Mohammed Ziyane on Thursday, the royal palace said.

A brief statement issued by the palace said the king ordered Minister of Justice Abdul Rahman Amal to also take over the human rights portfolio. It gave no other details.

Last week, Mr. Ziyane issued a statement to newspapers and news agencies criticising a government decision to arrest 245 people, many of them owners of small businesses, in a crackdown against smuggling which the interior ministry says deprives the economy of \$3 billion a year.

Mr. Ziyane, who was a member of the centre-right government led by Prime Minister Abdul Atif Filali, accused the government of abusing its powers and ignoring the law in its zeal to pursue the smugglers.

"This is plain and simple collective lynching," Mr. Ziyane said. "My duty is to confront them (the government) because I reject this collective lynching."

Those arrested will appear before criminal courts and could be sentenced to prison if found guilty.

Mr. Ziyane said the law stated that in cases of smuggling, the punishment was a fine for a first offence. Arrest and appearance in a criminal court was allowed only after a third offence was committed.

But Interior Minister Driss Basri, considered the most powerful man in the country after the king, defended government policy saying it was part of Morocco's agreement with the European Union (EU) as a condition for partnership.

"Morocco wants to be a economic partner of the EU. It cannot allow zones of darkness and corruption in its midst nor can it allow sectors to thrive which are not compatible with a free market economy," Mr. Basri told the weekly La Vie Economique.

51 journalists killed in 1994

NEW YORK (R) — For the second consecutive year, Algeria remains the most dangerous place in the world for journalists, a press freedom group said on Thursday.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said that 24 of the 51 journalists killed last year died in Algeria. Russia came in a distant second with seven deaths. Brazil third with four and Colombia fourth with three.

"Algeria continues to be by far the most dangerous country for journalists. The campaign of terror against local reporters constitutes the single most serious threat against journalists anywhere in the world and it should be vigorously condemned by everyone who values press freedom," said Kati Marton, the committee's chairwoman.

Since May 1993, when rebels began targeting local reporters and editors, 52 journalists have been assassinated in Algeria — the largest number the committee has recorded in any country in the last 10 years.

"Six confirmed deaths — one each in Azerbaijan, Burundi, Croatia and Somalia and two in Chechnya — were combat casualties. The other 45 cases, including the 24 in Algeria, all appear to have been homicides," the committee said.

Mohammad Mekati, a 39-year-old journalist working for the government-controlled newspaper Al-Mu-

jahid, was shot dead by gunmen, thought to be militants, near his home in Algiers on Jan. 9 this year.

The editor of the French-language newspaper L'Indépendant, Guitoun Nouredine, was seriously wounded in a militant attack outside the daily office in central Algiers five days later.

Khaled Aboul Kacem, aged 30 and working as a researcher at L'Indépendant, was killed in the same attack blamed by the authorities on Muslim fundamentalist gunmen.

Up to 40,000 people have been killed in Algeria's violence since early 1992 when authorities cancelled general elections which militants were set to win.

Iran protests German nuclear charges

TEHRAN (R) — Iran has protested to Germany over a German official's remarks that Tehran tried to illegally obtain nuclear materials, the official news agency IRNA said. It said Ambassador Hossein Mousavian lodged a protest with Bernd Schmidbauer, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's intelligence coordinator, about remarks by Germany's BND secret service head Konrad Porzner. "According to Mousavian, smugglers of nuclear materials might make such allegations, but for the German intelligence agency to accept such claims, speaks of 'naivety' and is 'unacceptable'," the agency said. Mr. Porzner told a parliamentary committee last week his agency had proof Iran and Iraq were trying through intermediaries to buy nuclear materials on the black market. Mr. Mousavian said Iran had voiced readiness to cooperate with Germany against the proliferation of nuclear arms, and that any remaining doubts would be removed through such cooperation, IRNA added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

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Sudanese minister heads for New York

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha has left for New York where the U.N. Security Council is to discuss an Ethiopian complaint against Sudan over an assassination bid against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, news reports said Friday. The Security Council was scheduled to discuss the case Monday. Ethiopia has accused Sudan of harbouring three Islamic extremists suspected of trying to assassinate Mubarak last June in Addis Ababa during a summit of the Organisation of African Unity. The independent daily Al Rai Al Akhar said that Mr. Taha left Khartoum on Thursday and would hold contacts and consultations in New York with representatives of nations within and outside the Security Council explaining his country's case.

Charles to visit Morocco in February

RABAT (R) — Britain's Prince Charles will make an official visit to Morocco at the end of February for a series of engagements as part of efforts to strengthen relations between the two countries, his office said on Friday. It would be the second official visit by the heir to the British throne to Morocco in less than a year. He came to Morocco in March 1995 for a visit designed to promote British business in Morocco. A statement from the prince's office at St. James's Palace sent through the British embassy in Rabat said the prince was coming at the invitation of King Hassan, who was away in the United States when the prince last visited Morocco. "The visit will help to further reinforce relations between Great Britain and Morocco and follows the prince of Wales's very successful visit to Morocco in March 1995," the statement said. Britain is hoping to double its trade with Morocco by the end of this century.

Turkey stopped Iran arms for Lebanon

TEL AVIV (R) — Turkey several weeks ago seized an Iranian arms shipment intended for Hizbollah (Party of God) guerrillas in Lebanon, Israeli security sources said on Friday. They confirmed an uncorroborated report by state-run Israel Radio that Turkish authorities seized six trucks loaded with arms intended for Hizbollah. Turkey on Wednesday accused Syria of having a role in the shipment which Turkish Interior Minister Teoman Unusan said was destined for Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas, "and other radical groups under Syria's control." But Israel Radio quoted "Arab sources" as saying the attempted shipment through Turkey pointed to the possibility Syria was responding to U.S. demands, spurred by Israel, that it block Iranian shipments to Hizbollah via its territory. On Wednesday Turkey's Unusan said the seized cache included six anti-aircraft guns and more than 1,600 mortar bombs.

Peres hails Kohl, denies Israel seeks German soldiers for Golan

MUNICH, Germany (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres hailed Chancellor Helmut Kohl on Thursday as a miracle worker who had made the seemingly impossible — good relations between Israel and Germany — a reality.

Mr. Peres, speaking as Mr. Kohl was presented an award by the Jewish charitable group B'nai B'rith, said Mr. Kohl had staunchly supported the Middle East peace process and helped bring Israel closer to the European Union (EU).

"This historic decision opens extensive horizons for Israel, giving rich content and perspective to German-Israeli relations," Mr. Peres said at a banquet in Mr. Kohl's honour.

"Good relations between the State of Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany seem almost impossible," Mr. Peres said. "Chancellor Helmut Kohl is, without a doubt, among those who have made this great miracle happen."

Earlier, Mr. Peres dismissed as baseless Israeli press reports that he wanted German troops to help keep the peace in the Golan Heights.

"I do not know where that information comes from. I never raised it," he said after meeting Mr. Kohl's Finance Minister Theo Waigel and Defence Minister Volker Ruehe in Munich.

But Mr. Kohl left the possibility open when journalists



Shimon Peres



Helmut Kohl

asked him after his talks with the prime minister.

"I don't think this is a topic one can speak of publicly at this time," Mr. Kohl said, adding that Germany could be helpful in many ways in the Middle East peace process, but that it was not for Bonn to decide how.

During Mr. Kohl's visit to Israel last June, Bonn officials said the Jewish state had expressed interest in having German troops help keep the peace in the Golan Heights.

Mr. Peres stressed the important part Germany had played in arranging EU aid for development projects in the region and helping fund and advise the Palestine National Authority as it took over responsibility for administering its areas.

At the ceremony attended by leading German politi-

cians and Jewish leaders from Germany and the United States, Mr. Kohl said he was deeply moved to receive B'nai B'rith's "President's Medal for Humanitarianism."

"I am well aware what it means for a German chancellor to receive such an award from the largest Jewish organisation in the world," he said.

Recalling the Holocaust, Mr. Kohl said: "There are some wounds that never heal."

He ended his speech saying, to loud applause: "Germany stands firmly by Israel's side. Your country, honoured Prime Minister Peres, has in the Germans a dependable friend and, where needed, loyal champion in the European Union."

Middle East desalination research centre under way in Oman

WASHINGTON (USIA) — By all estimates, the dwindling sources of water will be the next major issue facing the Middle East peacemakers in the coming few months and one unlikely contributor to the search for new resources is an Arab state furthermost from the Arab-Israeli conflict — Oman, on the southeastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula.

An outcry has been reverberating in the Middle East for some time over these non-renewable water resources. At the recent Amman economic summit conference, the World Bank sought to underline the "synergistic linkages" between the availability of water and regional development prospects. In fact, the World Bank is reportedly planning a summit conference later this year on this crucial issue.

The dwindling sources of water and the subsequent threat to growth was highlighted in a World Bank

warning in Amman that Mideast water resources are being depleted "under the insatiable pressure of rapid population growth, and the accompanying demands of urbanisation and irrigated agriculture."

Seven Mideast countries were said to be already withdrawing 100 per cent or "sometimes substantially more" of their renewable water resources each year. Egypt and Israel are already at or above the 90 per cent withdrawal level.

But Caio Koch-Weser, World Bank vice president for the Middle East and North Africa, held out some hope. He said if the Mideast countries adopt "water policies that support growth rather than ones that risk jeopardising it, the resulting growth could in turn eventually resolve the region's water needs."

Malta, a conference participant, was singled out by him as one country with a small open economy... which

is chronically short of fresh water, but which has successfully used economic growth to supply 70 per cent of its water needs by desalination." Several Gulf Arab countries rely on desalination for their freshwater needs as well.

In the so-called Working Group on Water Resources, one of several units established in the context of the Middle East multilateral peace process, Oman has taken the lead on the issue of desalination, according to State Department officials.

As a first activity, Oman won the group's endorsement in April 1994 to establish a regional desalination centre in Muscat as a result of a worldwide desalination research and technology survey Oman undertook.

"The overall aim of the centre," according to a fact sheet from the State Department, "is to help identify, refine, and develop economically viable and technically feasible methods and systems for desalting water."

Richard LeBaron, director of the State Department's Office of the Peace Process and the U.S. representative on the Working Group, described the centre as the "first opportunity" to bring together "the best minds (in the region) on desalination and to see what larger role it would have in the future," in the Middle East.

Given the wide range of conditions in the region, the State Department's fact sheet explained, it is likely that different approaches will be appropriate for different parts of the region. Most of the desalination projects underway are at present in the Gulf region, particularly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Oman and the United States have committed \$3 million each to the budding centre.

A design group consisting of representatives from Oman, Israel, Japan, the European Union, the United States, and Italy developed last September an action plan

to establish the centre as a legally constituted international institution and to begin initial centre activities.

Top on the group's agenda is the current search for an executive director, according to Dr. Charles Lawson, special assistant for science and technology at the State Department and the U.S. representative on the group's "interim board of governors."

He and the Omani Foreign Ministry representative, Ambassador Sayyid Badr, reported in an interview that substantial progress has been made towards the establishment of the centre after a meeting held last month at the World Bank offices here.

Representatives from 11 regional countries — Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates — and nine non-regional parties — the European Union, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the United

States, the United Nations, and the World Bank — participated in the December 14-15 meeting.

At this meeting, the centre's interim board of governors, composed of representatives from Oman, the United States, the European Union, Japan, Israel, and Italy approved the following steps:

- Establishment of a regional desalination information network, which, according to Dr. Lawson, will be set up by the United States' Bureau of Reclamation;
- Development of a broad training programme for those involved in desalination-related activities; and
- Development of research programmes.

At the same meeting, the board also welcomed South Korea as the newest member after the Seoul government's announcement that it was prepared to make "a substantial contribution" to the Muscat-based centre.

Dr. Lawson said that the

interim board is hoping that it can in the ensuing weeks narrow down the list of applicants for the position of executive director so that a final selection can be made next April when the board is scheduled to meet in Muscat.

Meanwhile, he continued, the centre will need to be formally organised — a step which will necessitate each of the member states to officially recognise the Muscat-based organisation.

The fact that an executive director has not been selected, Dr. Lawson added, does not mean that work on establishing the centre or starting training courses is at a standstill.

He pointed out that several member states have already offered to host training courses soon and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which will be establishing the electronic network with the hub in Muscat, will be shortly contacting several of the countries in the region to see which would want to be linked to the network.

Although he acknowledged there were research centres elsewhere in the Middle East, Lawson said the Muscat centre is unique in that it is the first regional one anywhere. He cautioned, however, that the centre is not going to "reinvent the wheel."

In fact, he continued, "We are encouraging and having discussions to make clear it does not duplicate work but operate in partnership with other centres, so that it can build upon their findings and help advance the technology in order to bring costs down."

Actually, the interim board initiated contacts last month with the desalination industry representatives from the International Desalination Association (IDA) and two of its affiliated organisations, the American Desalting Association (ADA) and the Water Sciences and Technology Association (WSTA).

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:30	.....	Shomom (cartoon)
14:30	.....	Wish Kid (cartoon)
15:00	.....	Harry and the Hendersons
15:25	.....	Blue Heelers
16:00	.....	Drama - Voyagers
17:00	.....	Children's Programme: Only 17:15
17:30	.....	Cupido
18:00	.....	Scene - Les Compagnons de l'Adventure
18:30	.....	Scene - Chateau Valen
19:15	.....	Magazine - Fiat Pas Rever
19:30	.....	News Headlines
19:45	.....	Major Dad
20:00	.....
21:10	.....	The Stamp of Greco
21:30	.....	Drama - Hawaii Five-0
22:00	.....	News in English
22:30	.....
23:50	.....	Feature Film: "Crisis Heart"
	.....	Mancuso FBI (Pt 1)

PRAYER TIMES

05:00 Fair (Sunrise) (Fair)

14:48 Maghrib

17:08 Asr

18:21 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swifeth, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terresanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457.

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to rise further with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southerly moderate. On Sunday skies will be partly cloudy with a chance for rain.

In Aquila, warm weather conditions will prevail with winds northerly moderate and sea calm.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Nidal Al-Awad 751672
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi 893542
Dr. Fayez Dabbas 759155
Dr. Mazen Al-Nahli 830435
Firas pharmacy 661912
Al Asma pharmacy 637955
Al-Salam pharmacy 666251
Yaqoub pharmacy 649455
Shmeisani pharmacy 637960
Najm pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281741
Alquh pharmacy (—)

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 75121
Highway Police 653402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605880
Overseas Club 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 767111
Telephone Information (direct assistance) 121
Overseas Club 610230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 771111
Water Authority 680160
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642301/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 632411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mulhay, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 609131
University Hospital 845645
Al-Muasher Hospital 862273
The Islamic, Abdali 661127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 6224050
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 265199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09/83323
Zarqa National Hospital 09/83323
Ibn Sina Hospital 09/891540
1445 New York, Amman 09/90732
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital 09/94901

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital 02127555
Greek Catholic Hospital 02127275
Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital 02134710

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)33206. 5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:00	.....	Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:00	.....	Damascus (RJ)
10:30	.....	Jeddah (add) (RJ)
14:05	.....	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20	.....	Cairo (RJ)
17:55	.....	London, Beirut (RJ)
19:40	.....	Vienna (RJ)
23:25	.....	Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

02:40	.....	Bahrain, Doha (GF)
14:20	.....	Rome (AZ)
15:00	.....	Vienna (OS)
18:15	.....	Dubai (EK)
20:10	.....	Beirut (ME)
20:40	.....	Pans, Damascus (AF)
22:05	.....	Larnaca (CY)
22:35	.....	Cairo (MS)
22:45	.....	Athens, Beirut (OA)
23:25	.....	Amsterdam (KL)
01:15	.....	London, Damascus (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:25	.....	Beirut (RJ)
06:30	.....	Aqaba (RJ)
11:00	.....	Vienna (RJ)
13:30	.....	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
14:05	.....	Pans, Brussels (RJ)
15:50	.....	Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:05	.....	Jeddah (add) (RJ)
18:15	.....	Cairo (RJ)
20:05	.....	Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:10	.....	Larnaca (RJ)
20:15	.....	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:30	.....	Jeddah (add) (RJ)
21:00	.....	Ahu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
01:00	.....	Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45	.....	Beirut (ME)
13:30	.....	Bahrain, Sharjah (GF)
15:00	.....	Rome (AZ)
15:15	.....	Vienna (OS)
19:15	.....	Dubai (EK)
22:05	.....	Larnaca (CY)
23:25	.....	Cairo (MS)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	.....	700 / 300
Banana	.....	650/50
Banana (Mukammal)	.....	580/580
Banana (Imported)	.....	800/700
Cabbage	.....	80 / 50
Carrot	.....	180/100
Cauliflower	.....	180/100
Cucumbers (large)	.....	300 / 200
Cucumbers (small)	.....	550 / 400
Eggplant	.....	250 / 120
Garlic	.....	900/750
Green Fruit	.....	220/150
Lemon	.....	370/250
Marrow (large)	.....	100 / 50
Marrow (small)	.....	80 / 100
Onion (green)	.....	180/100
Onion (dry)	.....	220 / 150
Orange	.....	650/50
Pepper (hot)	.....	600 / 450
Pepper (sweet)	.....	250/180
Peas	.....	180/100
String Beans	.....	650 / 500
Spinach	.....	140 / 80
Tomato	.....	13000



HIS MAJESTY King Hussein attends Friday prayer at Hudaifa Ibn Al Yaman Mosque in Tareq area in the outskirts of Amman. The King and worshippers listened to the Friday sermon which focused on the important meaning of fasting and the lessons learnt from it. The preacher praised the efforts made by King Hussein to serve his nation, as well as the Arab and Islamic nations. Attending the prayer with King Hussein were their

Royal Highnesses Princes Abdullah and Faisal, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, the King's military advisor Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, King Hussein and Prince Hassan's advisors and senior civil and military officials (Petra photo)

Writers await response on housing request

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has agreed to include Jordanian artists and writers in its health insurance programme and will study a request to construct housing units for them.

According to Hani Amad, president of the Jordanian Writers Association (JWA), who along with JWA board members met with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker on Thursday to discuss the association's request, the writers and artists will immediately benefit from the free health plan if they are not currently covered by any other institution.

He said the request for housing, however, will be reviewed by the prime minister and the concerned authorities.

Dr. Amad told the Jordan Times Friday that the association has already secured 70-dunums in the Shafa Badran district, northeast of Amman, but will require government assistance to build the proposed housing units for its members who have not yet benefited from any other housing plan.

At the meeting, attended by Minister of Culture Samir Habashneh, Sharif Zeid voiced his support for the writers and artists and instructed Minister of Health Aref Bataineh to immediately include them in the health plan, said Dr. Amad.

He said the JWA could receive a response to its request for housing after Ramadan.

Chamber of commerce urges increased inter-Arab trade

AMMAN (Petra) — The Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce Friday urged Arab countries to step up trade exchanges with Jordan.

According to federation Chairman Haidar Murad, the creation of a free trade zone within the Arab World can lead to the free flow of Arab goods into Arab markets.

Citing inter-Arab trading in 1994 as an example, Mr. Murad said Jordan's trade with Arab countries accounted for more than 27 per cent of the Kingdom's external trade.

But, he said, inter-Arab trade in 1994 was only seven per cent of the total trade of the Arab countries with the rest of the world.

As an example of Jordan's keenness to trade with other Arab countries,

he cited other 1994 figures, showing that 22 per cent of Jordan's imports came from the Arab region.

Mr. Murad said that in the first nine months of 1995 Jordan's overall trade with Arab countries amounted to JD 665 million, registering a 13 per cent increase over the same period in 1994.

Exports to Arab states during that period, he said, were worth JD 311.5 million, registering a two per cent increase over the same period in 1994.

Mr. Murad recommended increasing trade by promoting land, air and maritime transport agreements, organising trade fairs, reducing customs barriers and facilitating the flow of goods throughout Arab markets.

On Thursday, Khalidoun

Abu Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry met with United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Jordan Ahmad Ali Al Zughabi, and exchanged views about economic and trade relations.

According to a chamber statement Friday, in 1995 Jordan exported JD 39 million worth of products to the UAE, against JD 8 million worth of UAE goods imported by the Kingdom.

The two sides, said the statement, have agreed on exchanging UAE Jordanian information about trade and economy, visits by businessmen of the two countries to each other and discussions on joint ventures by the private sectors in the UAE and Jordan.

Queen, experts discuss NTFC strategy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Thursday chaired one of an ongoing series of meetings of concerned officials and specialists to discuss the strategy of the National Task Force for Children (NTFC) in preparation for a general meeting of all organisations and individuals involved in children's welfare, a Royal Court statement said.

Queen Noor emphasised that the NTFC will coordinate and collaborate with and support all the existing institutions working in the field of child welfare, while benefiting from their considerable experience and expertise, the statement said.

In discussing the Ministry of Social Development's efforts to draft the country's first "Childhood Act," which will outline children's basic rights, offer

guidelines for state intervention and address a range of issues, the statement said, the Queen expressed her hope that the NTFC will contribute to the completion and realisation of this act.

Last July, His Majesty King Hussein entrusted Queen Noor with the establishment and chairmanship of the NTFC to sustain and consolidate Jordan's achievements for its children and address emerging challenges.

The NTFC, which will monitor the condition and status of children in accordance with the Arab and International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the National Plan Action for Children, will conduct comprehensive research to highlight children's unmet needs and rights, organise workshops, disseminate data to all con-

cerned institutions, develop action programmes and launch campaigns to advocate their implementation.

Among the people attending the meeting were Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf, Minister of Social Development Salwa Damen-Masri, Senators Leila Sharaf and Na'ela Rashdan, Lower House of Parliament Deputy Fawzi Tu'eimeh, Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Jazza Jaradat, Advisor to the Queen In'am Mufli, Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Health Khaled Hadeed, Munthir Masri, Ayman Abu Laban and Dorrit Stahl of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Nour Dajani of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the statement said.

Produce prices remain low during first days of Ramadan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prices of vegetables and fruits remained low during the first few days of the fasting month of Ramadan which started last Sunday, unlike previous years when prices went up, according to Ministry of Supply sources.

Compared with their prices during last Ramadan, prices of vegetables and fruit on the second day of the lunar month registered a drop ranging from 20 per cent to 65 per cent, the sources said.

However, they added, prices of some items registered an increase ranging between 4 per cent and 25 per cent.

Such items include cucumbers, spinach, cau-

liflower and lemon.

The sources expected the prices to remain low during this month. To make sure that wholesalers and retailers observe the prices set by the Ministry, it has mounted inspection campaigns in the various parts of the Kingdom.

On Wednesday alone, supply inspectors issued 200 tickets to violators of prices and specifications in the various parts of the Kingdom, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Last year the ministry's inspection teams issued 26,874 tickets to violators of prices and specifications and referred others to the concerned courts.

International Geologists Union meets in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Geologists Association (JGA) is hosting in Amman a meeting of the Council of International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS).

The meeting, which opened Jan. 22 and will end Jan. 28, is discussing working papers by IUGS members.

According to Mr. Mohammad Al Saideen, the meeting accepted Jordan as a full member of the IUGS. Other Arab member states include Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq and Syria.

The JGA includes 960 as members who mainly work at the Natural Resources Authority, the Water Authority of Jordan, the Jordan Valley Authority, the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre, Jordanian universities, the Ministry of Public Works as well as private sector institutions.

Man suspected of slaying 70-year-old father arrested

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police Friday apprehended a 24-year-old man suspected of killing his 70-year-old father in his house in Jabal Nasser, an official source said.

The source told the Jordan Times that the victim Abdul Razaq Henin, who was killed early Friday morning, received two blows to the face by a sharp object "which caused his instant death."

The source said that police apprehended Mr. Henin's son Ahmad, one hour after the murder was committed. "We have a witness who informed us that Ahmad was the last person seen with his father," the source said.

After questioning Ahmad, the source added, he confessed to the police and reenacted the crime. No motive was given for why Ahmad killed his father.

"When Ahmad confessed in front of police he said that he was fully conscious when he killed his father and gave no further details," the source added.

Mr. Henin's body was transferred to Al Bashir's hospital for an autopsy.

Meanwhile, police Friday continued search for possible suspects in connection with the murder of a 35-year-old man, who was found killed in Khirbet Al Souq Wednesday night.

Fahmi Na'em was discovered by his wife in their house late Wednesday evening, according to the official. Mr. Na'em received several gunshot in the head and chest.

According to the source, authorities have clues to some possible suspects, but he would not elaborate.

Tragedy hits family of Jordan's youngest betrothed

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Six-and-a-half-year-old Amira is very enthusiastic but matter-of-fact about her engagement to her first cousin Mohammad, one year her elder. She affirms she likes Mohammad "very much" and says she hopes that "by the will of God, I will marry him" although she has no idea when.

"The family will decide," said Amira when asked how soon she hoped to get married. But her engagement to Mohammad is an established fact and both families are determined to go through the marriage when the time is right, several years from now.

The civil law of Jordan, which is based on Islamic law, stipulates that a girl has to be 15 and a boy 16 before they can marry. But there is no law that bans early engagement.

It was with great pomp and show that Mohammad's father, Fayed Yassin, staged the betrothal of his son and niece in Aqaba two weeks ago. It was as if he had an inkling that his end was near and he insisted that he wanted to witness the engagement of the two third-graders, says his sister and Amira's mother, Subaila Yassin.

Tragedy indeed struck the family a few days later — Fayed Yassin, 44, a water tank operator, died on Jan. 22 of a heart attack.

A word is a word, and that was what led to Amira being officially proclaimed Mohammad's would-be wife.

When Amira was born six-and-

a-half years ago, her father, Qassem Yassin, a grocer, promised his brother-in-law Fayed that "my girl is for Mohammad," who was born only a few weeks earlier, the first offspring of his parents after 15 years of marriage.

But Amira's father did not live to see the happy day when both families fulfilled his pledge. He passed away five years ago.

"I thought it was a joke when my brother came to my house with his son Mohammad two weeks ago and asked for Amira's hand in marriage for Mohammad," recalls Subaila Yassin, a member of the Aqaba Women's Committee. "The family had indeed accepted that the two would be married when they grew up, but we thought it was too early for an engagement because we would become the laughing stock of the town."

"But my brother did not agree. He insisted that he wanted to witness the happy occasion of his son getting engaged, and he knew that his end was near. I did not want to upset him and hence I agreed to the engagement," she told the Jordan Times.

"In fact, I had dreamt the night before that our (late) mother had come back and was asking for my brother," she added. I had a premonition that my brother was going to die."

Fayed Yassin's behaviour also indicated he somehow felt his death was near.

He invited the "entire town of Aqaba, going around every street and informing everyone he saw" of his son's pending engagement,

said Ms. Yassin.

As a result, more than 600 people, relatives, friends and well-wishers, thronged the "Gulf Club," in the heart of Aqaba town to witness Amira's betrothal with Mohammad. The owner of the club offered the premises free of charge for the event.

"There was not enough room for all the people, and the crowd spilled over to the courtyard," recalled Najoud, Amira's 18-year-old sister, who herself was engaged only a month ago to 29-year-old trucker Khaled. "Amira's engagement was a very happy occasion for all of us since it was in realisation of our father's pledge."

Fayed Yassin continued partying for two days after the engagement. He slaughtered sheep and invited, on the first day, all family members throughout the country, and, on the second day, the guests were mostly officials, including the district governor.

Ms. Yassin said her brother was hospitalised a few days after the engagement ceremony after he complained of pain in his legs.

"We were shocked to be informed the next day that he died of a heart attack," she added. She said that the death had strengthened the resolve of both families "to maintain the engagement and to ensure that the two get married when they grow up, perhaps eight or nine years from now."

"Both children like each other, and everyone is hoping that they would uphold the wishes of their families when they are of marriage age."



Engaged cousins Mohammad and Amira Yassin

Police apprehend suspected arsonists

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police Friday announced that they have apprehended three youths allegedly responsible for setting the Jordan Veterinary Association (JVA) building ablaze two weeks ago after breaking into the safe and stealing electric equipment that was in the building.

Amman Police Chief Major General Adel Armouti told reporters during a press conference held at the Public Security Department headquarters in Abdali that the youths aged 16 and 17 set the JVA building on fire to conceal their finger prints.

The police official said that one of three youths, who was identified only as Mohammad S. 16, was employed recently by the

association to help its guard with the office work and "apparently he memorised the secret numbers for the safe with the intention to burglar it."

Maj. Gen. Armouti said that Mohammad S. planned to open the safe with two of his friends, who were also identified only as Samer A. 17, and Saher A. 16.

Maj. Gen. Armouti added that on the night of the incident the youths broke into the building, opened the safe found it empty "and stole the electric equipment that they found."

He said that the three were apprehended the same evening by authorities while attempting to sell the stolen equipment in the market.

According to the police official, all three juveniles confessed to and reenacted their crime.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

* Two films: "Der Zug," (in French with English subtitles) and "Europa," (in German with French subtitles) at Goethe-Institut at 7:00 p.m.

PLAYS

* "Between two Jaws," at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
* "Ramadan Supermarket" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre 8:00 p.m.

CONCERTS

* Musical performance by Mughirah at the Phoenix Gallery, Gardens Street at 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Photography and paintings of railways and trains at Goethe-Institut, (until Jan. 31).
* Paintmaking and paintings by Jordanian artist Yasser

Dweik at Darat Al Funn, Jabal Lawweideh. Also displaying paintings and sculptures by contemporary artists (until Feb. 18).

* Contemporary and Traditional Jewellery at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 699141) (until Jan. 31).

* Plastic (abstract) art exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Uthaina (until Feb. 6).
* Paintings by artist Raphael Chabrol at the French Cultural Centre (until Jan. 31).

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Hong Kong's transition enters final phase as China sets up panel

BEIJING (AFP) — The final countdown for Hong Kong's transition of sovereignty began Friday as China formally established a committee charged with making concrete preparations for the region's post-1997 administration.

Some 500 days before the British colony's reversion to China on July 1, 1997, National People's Congress Chairman Qiao Guohua declared the setting up of the 150-member Preparatory Committee of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (SAR) in a ceremony in the Great Hall of the People.

"The historic moment when our country resumes sovereignty over Hong Kong is drawing closer. This is a heavy and complicated task," Mr. Qiao told members of the committee — widely expected in the British colony to become a "shadow government" to the present administration.

"The work for the preparation of Hong Kong's return ... has entered into the

stage of concrete implementation," Mr. Qiao said.

He added that the committee's task of laying the groundwork for establishing Hong Kong's first government and legislature was of "great significance."

After the handover, Beijing has vowed to replace the colony's existing assembly, the Legislative Council, elected last year under democratic reforms pushed through by Governor Chris Patten.

The Preparatory Committee is to set up a 400-member selection committee to decide on Hong Kong's first chief executive — the top official in the post-1997 administration — who Xinhua said would be elected in the second half of 1996.

Mr. Qiao said he hoped committee members would "ensure that Hong Kong people run Hong Kong and that Hong Kong has a high degree of autonomy" as promised by Beijing.

Analysts in Hong Kong have scoffed at the assertion that the Chinese authorities

will not interfere in the committee's work or the region's post-1997 administration.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin, who posed in a group photo after committee members had each received their certificates of appointment, said the inclusion of 94 Hong Kong citizens on the panel "shows that the Chinese Communist Party wants to work with all patriots."

Mr. Jiang, in a brief address, said the committee "faces a heavy task," stressing that Hong Kong's return was only the "first step" towards national reunification and should serve as "an example" for the return of Macau and, eventually, Taiwan.

The committee is to hold its first plenary session Friday before splitting up into working groups that will continue meetings through Saturday.

In addition to drawing up plans for Hong Kong's first government and legislature, the committee is also

empowered to arrange details of handover ceremonies and adapt British laws to the future administration's statute books.

Members rejected suggestions that they would be little more than puppets for the Chinese authorities to impose their will on Hong Kong or that the committee would emerge as a shadow government before 1997.

"We are a Preparatory Committee helping with the transition of Hong Kong to China, so this is not a government, this is in fact a preparation for the future of Hong Kong," laying down the foundation, said Arthur Li, vice chancellor-designate at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Mr. Li said he believed the committee was "certainly" representative of all the people of Hong Kong, despite criticism that none of the territory's pro-democracy politicians had been included.



India's paramilitary Border Security Force troopers who use camels to guard the desert borders of the state of Rajasthan, ride past the salute rostrum during a Republic Day parade in New Delhi Friday. India staged a military and civil parade to mark the day it launched its democratic constitution in 1950 (Reuters photo)

Two policemen die, Kashmiris protest on Indian Republic Day

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Bomb blasts across the country and protests in the troubled state of Kashmir marred grand celebrations Friday to mark the anniversary of India's birth as a republic.

Tens of thousands of people thronged a boulevard here to view a colourful parade showcasing India's weaponry, attended under unprecedented security by Indian leaders and Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who was the chief guest.

The highlight of the two-hour show was the 56-tonne Arjun, India's main battle tank unveiled this month, and the country's surface-to-surface "Prithvi" missile which the United States does not want deployed.

Millions across India watched the display on television.

But the festivities, marking the declaration of the world's largest democracy as a republic in 1950, were marred by powerful bomb explosions in some of the country's troubled spots.

Two officers of the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force were killed and another seriously injured when a bomb went off near the far-eastern city of Imphal, domestic news agencies said.

No one claimed responsibility, but police blamed insurgent groups fighting to secede the small state of Manipur bordering Burma. The groups had called for a boycott of the Republic Day functions.

Three other bombs exploded at different places in Imphal, but no one was injured. Three bombs were defused. Very few people turned out to see the Indian flag's unfurling at a police complex, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

A bomb also stalled the official function at Jaipur, 250 kilometres southwest of here, PTI said. No one was injured and none claimed responsibility.

In Kashmir, a powerful bomb blast

destroyed a government house in the northern town of Kupwara and disrupted ceremonies there, while a mass boycott by Muslims was carried out across the strife-torn valley.

An official was unfurling the Indian flag at Kupwara, 100 kilometres north of Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar, when the blast occurred. The official was immediately whisked away.

Muslims stayed indoors throughout the Kashmir Valley, where a bloody separatist drive has left more than 12,000 people dead, in response to calls by guerrillas to observe a "black day," police and residents said.

Streets throughout the valley, patrolled by troops, were deserted.

Soldiers also defused a missile close to a sports stadium in Srinagar, hours before an official unfurled the Indian tricolour.

Shabir Shah, a leader of Kashmir's independence campaign, said the mass boycott of the official function revealed that Muslims desired an end to Indian rule over the Himalayan province.

Elsewhere, constable Vijay Pal Singh Yadav died when he fell from the top of the 8.4-metre police station while trying to hoist the national flag near the northern town of Meerut, some 80 kilometres from here, officials said.

In New Delhi, thousands of police and paramilitary forces mounted unprecedented security around the Rajpath Boulevard during the military parade to foil possible attacks by Kashmiri, Sikh or Sri Lankan militants.

With one million soldiers, India has the world's fourth largest army, and President Shankar Dayal Sharma was saluted by hundreds of them during the parade here. Locals applauded the mass display of weaponry.

Cambodian troops continues slow advance towards Khmer Rouge base

KILO 38, Cambodia (AFP) — Government troops near this military outpost in northwest Cambodia Friday continued a painstakingly slow advance westwards towards the headquarters of Khmer Rouge guerrillas at Pailin.

Slowed by large numbers of landmines and booby traps — as well as dense bamboo forests — Phnom Penh forces were nonetheless closing in on Phnom Sleik, a rebel position 10 kilometres southwest of here, a senior division commander said.

If successful, the assault against Phnom Sleik would put the government closer to Pailin — about 35 kilometres from here near the Thai border — than it has been since 1994 when the army captured the town only to lose it a month later.

Since last week when the first small push of the drive against Pailin began, the government has only been able to advance six kilometres from what was then the frontline at the tiny hamlet of Treng.

Treng is about 42 kilometres south of Battambang town on National Route 10, which leads to the rebel base.

"We cannot use the road because of the mines and because we would be easy targets," a commander said.

"We are moving through thick bamboo forests, it is very slow," he said.

He said two of his soldiers had been killed and about 12 wounded since the push began.

The Khmer Rouge in the area, lodged mainly on hilltops, are backed by at least four tanks, which they have

been using along with anti-aircraft guns in an attempt to thwart the government advance, the commander said.

He would not say how many tanks the government had, but as he spoke a round from at least one army tank nearby was launched towards rebel positions.

Meanwhile, the government retook the village of Ampil Pram Daru — about 35 kilometres northwest of Battambang — which had been in rebel hands for nearly a year, according to police and military sources in Battambang.

The village was taken Thursday and is a gateway to a rebel logging road that runs north from Pailin to the guerrilla base at Phnom Malai, where the government is reportedly planning a major offensive.

Killer executed by firing squad in U.S.

DRAPER, Utah (R) — A five-man firing squad executed convicted child-killer John Albert Taylor early Friday, marking the first such punishment in the United States since 1977.

Taylor, 36, was executed at 12:03 a.m. mountain time (0703 GMT) for the 1989 rape and murder of 11-year-old Charla King, a prison official said.

"The execution of John Albert Taylor was completed and he was pronounced dead at 12:07," said Ray Wahl, director of field operations at the Utah State Prison.

"It went like clockwork," prison warden Hank Galletka said. "Just like we rehearsed."

As midnight neared, Taylor was crying and sitting very still with his head bowed, according to a prison log.

Taylor, the first prisoner to be executed in the United States by firing squad since Gary Gilmore in 1977, had also been praying and singing hymns with a Catholic priest.

One of the nine media witnesses, Paul Murphy of KTVX-TV Salt Lake, described the scene saying they "saw this very large man strapped to a chair. His eyes were darting back and forth. You heard one, two, three and a very loud boom."

"It appeared there was a genuine fear in his eyes," Mr. Murphy said.

"The image I have when I close my eyes is of his chest heaving upward after he was shot," said Kevin Dale Stanfield, another witness.

A tape recording of Taylor's last words was played for reporters after the execution.

"I would like to say for my family and my friends — as the poem was written 'remember me, but let me go,'" Taylor said.

Taylor, who complained of a nervous stomach throughout his last day, ate pizza with an uncle, Gordon Lee. Mr. Lee was also one of Taylor's three chosen witnesses.

Dole lashes out at 'liberal' U.S. media

WASHINGTON (R) — Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole Thursday blamed the "liberal media" for the unflattering reviews he received for his response to President Bill Clinton's State of the Union address.

Campaigning in Iowa and South Dakota, Sen. Dole lambasted the press for criticizing his performance, despite the fact that some of the harshest criticism came from fellow Republicans.

"I'm concerned about America, not the media ... They're having little heart palpitations about it because it's not the message the liberal media likes to hear," Sen. Dole said in Rapid City, South Dakota.

"If you don't sing their songs, you don't get good reviews," he said. "We'll just bang right in there. The liberal media isn't going to run America."

Sen. Dole's comments came as a new poll in the crucial state of Iowa showed his support down to 26 per cent, only eight points ahead of millionaire publisher Steve Forbes.

Republicans in Iowa hold the first major test of the campaign on Feb. 12, when party members attend local meetings to start the process of choosing their presidential nominee to challenge Mr. Clinton in November.

In his nationally televised speech Tuesday immediately after Mr. Clinton's address to both houses of Congress, Sen. Dole harshly attacked the president as a defender of big government and an enemy of individual initiative, moral values and fiscal responsibility.

He said Mr. Clinton "may well be the rear guard of the welfare state. He is the chief obstacle to a balanced budget ... He is almost the last public defender of a discredited status quo."

Reactions among Republicans to Sen. Dole's speech were bitter. Conservative columnist Robert Novak said the 72-year-old senator looked "old, tired and wooden". Even conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh said Sen. Dole lacked energy and passion.

Sen. Dole's Republican presidential rivals were even blunter, saying the speech made him look like a certain loser against Mr. Clinton.

Former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander has been arguing for weeks that Mr. Clinton would take Mr. Dole apart in a presidential debate. He said the two speeches bolstered his point.

"President Clinton can fake a compelling vision while Senator Dole is too decent to fake a vision he clearly does not have," Mr. Alexander said.

Conservative commentator Pat Buchanan said: "The Republicans' better nominate someone who can communicate a vision at least as well as Mr. Clinton ... I think it's going to put Bob Dole on the spot."

Texas Senator Phil Gramm's campaign put out four pages of unfavourable comments about Sen. Dole, some written by reporters, some by academics and some by Republicans.

Philippine Navy in firefight incident with suspected smugglers

MANILA (AFP) — The Philippine Navy reported Friday that a gunboat exchanged fire with a suspected smuggling vessel in coastal waters this week in an incident that authorities initially said involved intruders flying Chinese flags.

Commodore Eduardo Santos, a navy spokesman, retracted the earlier reports that the vessels flew Chinese flags in the incident which occurred Monday, and Beijing denied any involvement in what happened.

Commodore Santos told a news conference that two intruding vessels were flying faded red flags, but said they could not confirm earlier statements that they were Chinese flags. "It could have been the excitement of the moment," he said.

The latest Philippine Navy statement said that when

the navy ship tried to approach the two vessels, they sped off.

"The gunboat gave chase to (one of) the unidentified watercraft which fired on the navy patrol, thus forcing (it) to fire back," the statement said.

"One of the unidentified vessels tried to ram the Philippine Navy gunboat but the navy crew manoeuvred their vessel and continued firing," the statement said, adding that "after a 90-minute chase and a running gun battle, the two unidentified vessels were lost in the radar scope."

Military reports had earlier stated the vessels were suspected to be Chinese smugglers and were flying Chinese flags. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman in Beijing, commenting on the incident, said it "has nothing to do with the Chinese side."

A Philippine Foreign Department statement issued in Manila said that "the department considers the case as a matter of law enforcement without political significance."

"The gunboat's crew were unable to determine what exact type of watercraft they encountered or the number of the crew of the unidentified vessels because of darkness," the later navy statement said.

The clash occurred about 19 kilometres off Capones Island, near the former U.S. naval base at Subic Bay northwest of Manila.

The navy gunboat used its 25 millimeter gun, its .50 caliber heavy machine guns and M60 light machine guns, the navy said, but did not mention if the other vessels' crews suffered casualties. An earlier military report said the foreign vessel had incurred casualties.

Colombian president loses support of coalition partner

BOGOTA (AFP) — A third cabinet minister has resigned as a crisis deepens over allegations that President Ernesto Samper knowingly accepted drug money to finance his 1994 campaign.

Foreign Trade Minister Luis Alfredo Ramos announced his resignation Thursday after his Conservative Party ordered all its members in senior government positions to step down in a show of no confidence.

The party took the decision, said Senator Fabio

Valencia, a leader of the Conservative Party, "because the facts have overwhelmed the president's personal situation."

Health Minister Augusto Galan and Transport Minister Juan Gomez Martinez, also a Conservative, resigned Wednesday.

Mr. Samper said he understood "perfectly the reasons that led these people, following the guidelines of their party to take this decision."

He denied, however, that the resignations had weakened his government and

said that he would reshuffle his cabinet.

"We will continue to work with all those who want to accompany me in the task of pushing Colombia forward and improving the living conditions of its neediest people," he said.

Mr. Samper has been deluged by calls for his resignation since his former campaign manager and defence minister, Fernando Botero, charged Monday that the president knew his campaign was financed by the Cali drug cartel.

Hillary gets dig at Bill's driving

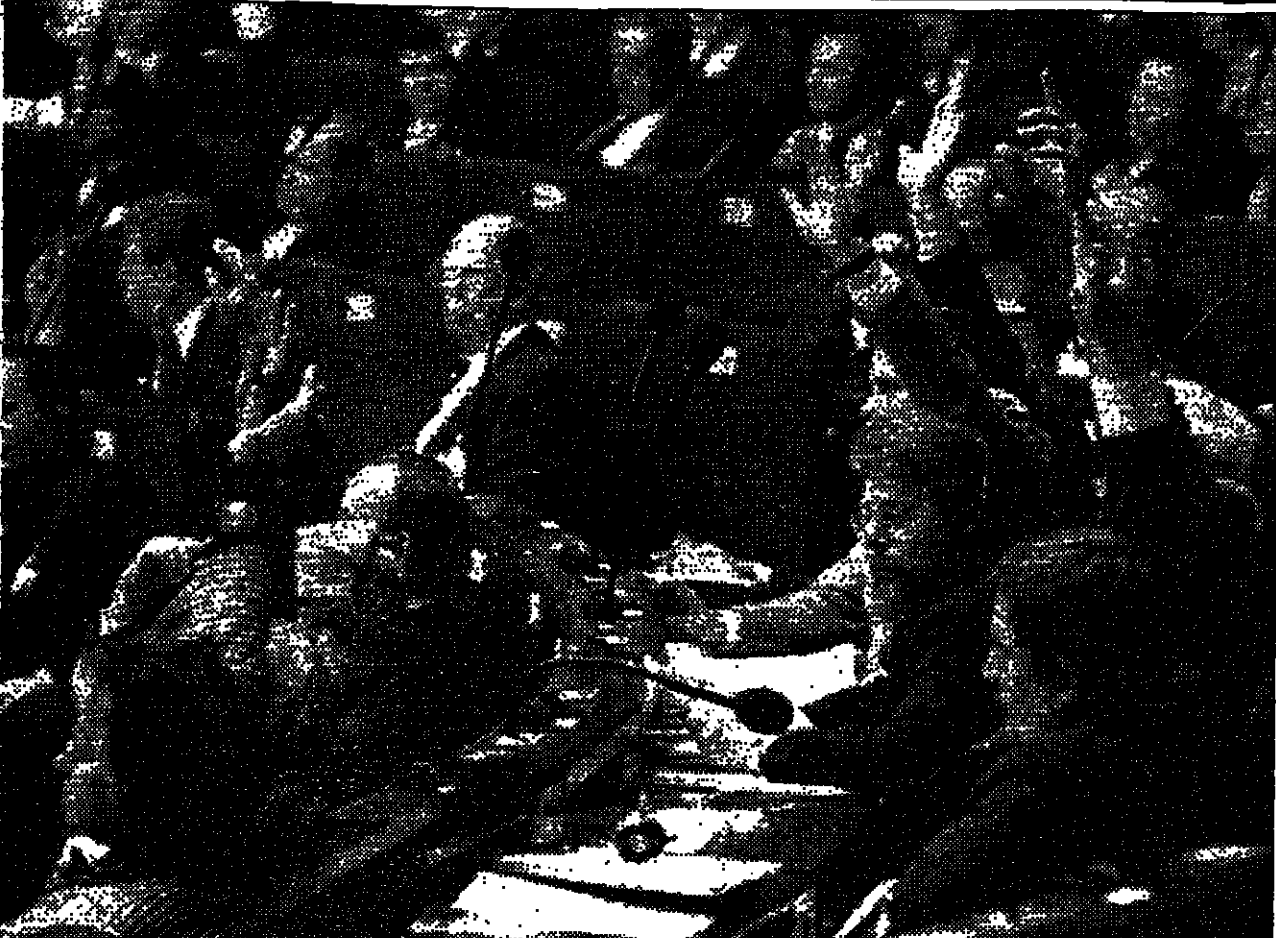
LEBANON, N.H. (R) — U.S. First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said Thursday a good reason to keep her husband in the White House is to keep him off the roads. The first lady got in the dig at the president's driving skills while telling a group of girls scouts that her husband was intent on teaching their daughter Chelsea to drive. "One of the reasons to keep re-electing Bill Clinton to public office, to have other people drive, is to keep the roads safer," Hillary Clinton told the group. Presidents do not drive themselves for security reasons. Chelsea Clinton will turn 16 in February and will be old enough to get her driver's license. The first lady was in New Hampshire campaigning for her husband's re-election. The state will hold the first primary of the 1996 election on Feb. 20.

U.K. film industry told to change to survive

LONDON (R) — The British film industry is short of funds and needs a radical rethink to survive, a survey published Friday said. The survey's respondents — mostly senior film industry figures — highlighted a lack of finance as the British film industry's core weakness. The survey agreed that cuts in government funding and a lack of tax incentives were to blame for some of the industry's problems. But it said bad business planning was also at fault. "A fundamental shift in thinking is necessary to bring about structural change within the British film industry and, ultimately, encourage a more favourable investment environment," the Film 2000 Survey said. Britain's film industry seemed set for a revival after the surprise success in 1994 of the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and another coup later that year when brothers Ridley and Thomas Scott bought Shepperton Studios. But the industry remains a poor cousin not just to Hollywood but to countries like Ireland, which offers tax relief to producers, said the survey by media accountants Casson Beckman. Recent films such as *Braveheart*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Richard III* all changed their original location plans and went to Ireland because it was cheaper to work there, the survey said.

Circus leaves crippled elephant with vet

CLUJ, Romania (R) — Fantik, a three-year-old elephant, is lying crippled in a Romanian veterinary clinic, left behind by a circus which has moved on without him. "He suffers from osteoporosis, a lack of calcium and proteins, from infancy. We've put him on a calcium drip, but his condition is quite serious," Cluj veterinarian Nicolae Mates told Reuters from the Transylvanian city Tuesday. "He can't stand on his feet. We have to lift him on pulleys to make him change position," Dr. Mates said. Fantik collapsed three months ago and was brought to the Cluj Hospital by a passing Austrian circus which has now moved on to another Romanian city to shelter for the winter. Dr. Mates said the Indian elephant was born in a zoo in Ukraine where it was abandoned by its mother and bottlefed. The circus bought him in a job-lot with a bunch of camels. He was about the size of a "small, sick bull" with short broken tusks. "He whimpers when we lift him to prevent sores from forming on his sides. He's only a baby, albeit a one-tonne baby Indian elephant. Adults of his species weigh six to seven tonnes, but I'm not so sure he will live that long," Dr. Mates said.



Members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe raise their hands in a vote on one of the 34 amendments to the resolution of adoption of the Russian bid for membership in the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe parliamentarians decide to admit Russia to the 38-nation group in a 164-35 vote, which marks a milestone in Russia's campaign for a place in the community of democratic European nations after the end of the Cold War (Reuters photo)

Sri Lanka rebels admit shooting down helicopter

COLOMBO (R) — A leader of Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger guerrillas said the rebel group shot down an air force helicopter this week and vowed that it would retake its northern stronghold of Jaffna City, captured by the army last month.

The MI-17 transport helicopter with 39 servicemen on board disappeared without trace over the Indian Ocean Monday. The military said they suspected it was shot down by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

A search for the machine is still under way. "We will recapture Jaffna through guerrilla warfare," Sivagnanam Karikalalan, deputy LTTE political leader and political chief for the eastern Batticaloa region, told reporters Thursday.

"The government troops cannot hold Jaffna for a long time. We are strong enough to attack the army and destroy their positions. Last week we brought down a helicopter."

He said the Tigers withdrew from Jaffna to save civilian lives. "We didn't wish to die like insects," he said.

The air force and navy Friday resumed their search for the giant Russian-made helicopter, one of a series of aircraft acquired by the air force after the rebels last year began using high-technology weapons, such as anti-aircraft missiles, in a series of attacks.

Rebel missiles have shot down two air force HS-748 avro transport planes, a Y-8 transport and a Pucara ground attack aircraft since last April when the Tigers broke off a truce and resumed their 13-year separatist war in which more than 50,000 people have died.

The military Friday said two police commandos were killed in the eastern Amparai district Thursday when the LTTE ambushed their vehicle. Two civilians were killed in the crossfire.

The navy destroyed five "Sea Tiger" boats in the Jaffna lagoon on the same day, the Defence Ministry's Operational Headquarters said in a release. No navy casualties were reported.

The rebels are fighting for an independent homeland, or "Eelam", in the north and east for minority Tamils.

"Our goal is Eelam," Mr. Karikalalan said at the meeting with reporters at Arasadiyiv village in Batticaloa district. "We will not lay down arms until the security of the (Tamil) people is secured," a copy of the speech was delivered to Reuters Friday.

Mr. Karikalalan said 80 per cent of the east was under Tiger control.

Mr. Karikalalan accused India of providing arms to Sri Lankan security forces.

He said the Indian government was providing "arms and other incentives" to the Colombo government to lead a military campaign against the LTTE.

The rebel leader gave no details of the alleged Indian assistance to the Sri Lankans. Both New Delhi and the Colombo government had denied that India was providing military aid to Sri Lanka.

Burma: Aung San Suu Kyi should step down

RANGOON (AFP) — The Burmese government said Friday that Aung San Suu Kyi should step down as leader of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) as she had become dictatorial and had ignored the will of the people.

A commentary appearing in an official Burmese-language newspaper accused the NLD leader of having betrayed the trust of the party's supporters by becoming dictatorial and misleading them with her "feminine wiles."

It also suggested that the NLD take steps to find a way out of its present predicament brought on by a decision to withdraw from a constitutional convention that reconvened in November.

The commentary, entitled "give up little sister," was the latest in a long line of official newspaper commentaries and editorials to single out Burma's leading pro-democracy activist for criticism.

"With no-one to control

or criticise her, the leader, who had been clearly chosen for her popularity rather than her political capabilities, had become reckless and overbearing so that dictatorship now prevails inside the party," the commentary said. The NLD was one of 10 political parties represented in the military-run National Convention, which is drawing up a new constitution for Burma, but withdrew in November as the forum was "unacceptable in the present form."

Meanwhile a military official has said the surrender of Burma's reputed drug warlord Khun Sa and his Mong Tai Army (MTA) represented a major victory for the Burmese military and averted a long and bloody conflict.

"The surrender of Khun

Chechens kidnap member of pro-Moscow government

MOSCOW (AFP) — Chechen separatists kidnapped a member of the pro-Moscow Chechen government, Lecha Saligov, and his whereabouts were unknown, Interfax News Agency reported Friday.

Mr. Saligov, head of the government committee on publishing and culture, was kidnapped Thursday as he was returning to Grozny from his home village of Achkhoi Maran, some 50 kilometres southwest of the Chechen capital. Grozny government officials told Interfax.

Meanwhile, Radio Russia reported that Chechen rebels holding 29 Russian power plant workers hostage had set a new condition for their release.

They insisted on meeting Russian representatives as well as demanding to swap each worker for a Chechen fighter taken prisoner during last week's fighting in the Dagestani village of Pervomaiskaya.

Russia reported fresh night-time skirmishes in Chechnya Thursday as the Council of Europe debated

whether to accept Moscow's membership bid despite 13 months of conflict in the rebel region.

The Interior Ministry said rebel fighters had opened fire on Russian forces 17 times in the previous 24 hours and security had been stepped up to "protect public order," ITAR-TASS news agency reported. It gave no details of the security measures.

A ministry spokesman said one Interior Ministry serviceman had been killed and three wounded in the latest bout of what is now regular daily fighting.

Clashes have worsened in the last few weeks of the conflict over the north Caucasus region's drive for independence, badly battering a ceasefire signed last summer.

The skirmishing has increased problems for President Boris Yeltsin and further damaged Russia's image as it tries to join the Council of Europe, which seeks to promote human rights and democracy in Europe.

Canada cabinet shuffled to fight Quebec separation

OTTAWA (R) — Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced sweeping cabinet changes Thursday, bringing in new blood to bolster his flagging battle against French-speaking Quebec separatists.

In the first overhaul since he took office in late 1993, Mr. Chretien made 20 changes in what is now a 35-member cabinet, sweeping out four ministers and taking in articulate new Quebecers he hopes will do a better job of promoting unity.

The overall fiscal conservatism of the Liberal government will remain unchallenged, with Paul Martin staying as finance minister to continue to push through deficit reduction. But it is the issue of Quebec that has taken centre stage in Canada.

"We intend to be very present in Quebec to sell Canada in Quebec," Mr. Chretien told reporters after the new ministers took office. "This team is ready to go to face the challenge of job creation and the challenge of keeping the country together."

Mr. Chretien was widely popular during his first two years in office but his support has eroded sharply since his government came within a whisker of losing a referendum on Quebec sovereignty last October. He was roundly criticised for a lackluster strategy on behalf of Canadian unity.

His government has one year to recover the initiative from the separatists and to erode what has now become majority Quebec support for leaving Canada.

Separatist Lucien Bouchard plans to concentrate as premier on getting Quebec's finances in order until Canada holds a national constitutional conference early next year. Then he says the window will be open for a new referendum. "Today we turn the page to a new chapter with a renewed team that combines proven, experienced ministers and a new generation of ministers, enthusiastically committed to Canadian unity," Mr. Chretien said.

Three Quebecers who played little role in the October referendum left the cabinet — Foreign Minister Andre Ouellet, Canadian Heritage Minister Michel Dupuy and Secretary of State for the Status of Women Sheila Finestone.

Mr. Chretien brought in two unelected Quebec figures, high-profile political scientist Stephane Dion and Pierre Pettigrew, a political adviser and business consultant, who have stood for Canadian unity. He said he would call special elections soon to get them into the House of Commons.

Mr. Chretien, himself a French-speaking Quebec native, also brought another Quebec member of parliament into his cabinet and elevated a fourth, Alfonso Gagliano, to labour minister.

Mr. Dion created a stir by issuing at the ceremony a two-page statement of his views on Quebec and said he would not shy from telling Mr. Chretien what he thought the government needed to do.

Council of Europe accepts Russia

STRASBOURG, France (R) — Russia is to join the Council of Europe in a boost for President Boris Yeltsin, but the 38-nation group expects a struggle to get Moscow to embrace its human rights ideals.

In a landmark vote confirming the end of the cold war, the council's Parliamentary Assembly voted 164-35 for Russian membership Thursday despite savage criticism of Moscow's military crackdown in Chechnya.

Moscow will accede to the council, set up in 1949 to help safeguard democracy and human rights, in February or March following ratification by member governments, which is seen as a formality.

"With Russian membership, the council will become a truly pan-European institution," said Leni Fischer, the German president of the assembly.

And then the hard part will begin.

"We're placing very much confidence in Russia, but

they know their problems too," Ms. Fischer said.

As a member, Russia's obligations will include ratification within a year of conventions guaranteeing human rights, protecting minorities and outlawing torture.

Parliamentarians also voted to urge Russia to end executions "from the day of accession" rather than within three years as originally planned, the official deadline for it to abolish the death penalty under European conventions.

And they agreed to set up a committee to monitor Russian military actions in Chechnya, likely to be anathema to Mr. Yeltsin, who has received a personal endorsement from the council's vote. He is widely expected to seek re-election in June.

The vote is a relief for Mr. Yeltsin from mounting criticism because of many thousands of people killed, wounded or displaced since Russian tanks and troops moved into the mostly

Muslim region of Chechnya in December 1994.

The text of the council's report admitted baldly that Russia did not fulfil council criteria. Its 1992 membership bid was frozen for seven months last year in a protest over its military campaign in Chechnya.

"Russia does not yet meet all Council of Europe standards. But integration is better than isolation cooperation is better than confrontation," it said, pointing to deficiencies in areas ranging from minority rights to the rule of law.

Vladimir Lukin, head of a delegation of visiting Russian parliamentarians and a member of the liberal anti-government Yabloko Bloc in Moscow, welcomed the council vote but cast doubt on whether its requirements would be met.

"We were issued with recommendations here. The question is, are they compatible with common sense and our realities?" he asked at a news conference.

The Council of Europe has few teeth to bring states into line. It can in theory suspend membership as a final sanction if states flout commitments.

Russia welcomed the "yes" vote, for which Mr. Yeltsin and many Western governments had lobbied hard.

"This event is unquestionably important for Russia and no less so for Europe, because a united Europe is impossible without Russia," a senior Russian Foreign Ministry official told Interfax News Agency.

Far-right Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy expressed dismay, saying the vote could dim his chances in the presidential poll in June when Mr. Yeltsin may seek re-election.

"This is bad for me. I'm not happy. This will help Mr. Yeltsin," he said at a party at the Russian consulate in Strasbourg after the vote.

Ministers to meet to ease new Anglo-Irish rift

BELFAST (R) — British and Irish ministers will hold urgent talks to try to resolve a fresh dispute over how to negotiate a permanent peace settlement for Northern Ireland, officials in Dublin said.

Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring and British Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew are "looking at their schedules," the officials said, and a meeting was expected early next week.

Mr. Spring requested talks after British Prime Minister John Major shocked Dublin by proposing elections in Northern Ireland to break a deadlock caused by guerrillas' refusal to hand in their weapons before being admitted to peace talks.

Mr. Major's proposal in effect sidelined a report by a mediation committee, led by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, which concluded that Britain was unrealistic to insist on a surrender of weapons before all-party talks could start.

Irish Prime Minister John Bruton complained that he was not consulted in advance about the elections idea, which he said could be interpreted as threatening an agreed timetable for talks on a political settlement.

"That will create distrust, perhaps unjustifiable distrust, but distrust just the same," Mr. Bruton told the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg.

Mr. Major's office confirmed that he had later sent a letter to Mr. Bruton and British sources said it reiterated an assurance that elections would not be aimed at resurrecting an old-style Protestant-dominated parliament in Belfast.

Mr. Major plumped for an elected all-party forum as the route to peace talks after Mr. Mitchell bluntly told him that his preferred option — partial disarmament by the IRA and rival Protestant guerrillas leading to round-table talks — was a non-starter.

Irish Catholic nationalists accused him of putting forward the elections option to win the votes of pro-British Protestant Northern Irish legislators in the House of Commons, where Mr. Major has only a slender majority.

Mr. Mitchell, who proposed that the guerrillas should disarm during peace talks, said in an interview from New York with Britain's Channel 4 Television news that a compromise on the arms issue was a good way forward.

Bangladesh premier puts off Khulna trip, opposition seeks army return to barracks

DHAKA (AFP) — Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has called off a campaign trip to Bangladesh's southern Khulna city for the upcoming elections after the opposition called a general strike, the Daily Star newspaper reported Friday.

However, the Bangladesh News Agency (BSS) quoted Mrs. Khaleda's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) officials as saying that no such trip had been planned and reporters had been mistaken.

"The PM's two-day tour to Khulna and Bagerhat has been curtailed to a one-day programme only at Bagerhat," where she will address a party rally, the newspaper said, quoting sources in the prime minister's secretariat.

No reason for the change was given. Officials were not available for comment Friday but opposition claimed it was due security concerns.

Mrs. Khaleda, who launched her campaign Wednesday from northeastern Sylhet district amid violent clashes between opposition and police, was scheduled to visit Khulna and nearby Bagerhat district at the weekend.

The Star said Mrs. Khaleda would launch a "massive" campaign from Tuesday in the

run-up to disputed Feb. 15 parliamentary polls.

The opposition, led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League, is boycotting what it calls "farical" elections and plans to call strikes to coincide with each of Mrs. Khaleda's election visits.

More than 100 people, including security personnel, were injured in two days of anti-Khaleda protests in Sylhet.

Bangladesh is in the grips of a 21-month opposition campaign to force Mrs. Khaleda to step down and organise elections under a neutral caretaker government. The opposition claims that polls with her in power could not be free and fair.

Mrs. Khaleda rejected the charges and asserted the country's Westminster-style constitution does not provide for a caretaker administration.

The opposition accuses the BNP government of using the military to cling to power and says it cannot accept the use of the defence forces, camped across the country to recover unauthorised weapons, to protect an "illegal government" and hold "one-party elections."

MORE



Jordan Times

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Opening throttle with care

THE MINISTRY of Transport's interest in constructing a passenger train service between Amman, Zarqa and beyond should be complemented by a wider and more comprehensive study of how best to link the capital with all Jordanian cities, including Aqaba. Any railway project that does not envision linking the Jordan port city on the Red Sea with the rest of the country by a modern and efficient rail system would be lacking in scope. Jordan imports and exports mainly through Aqaba and there is obviously a pressing need to depend on modern rail connections with our only outlet to the sea to alleviate highway congestions and road hazards which are being posed by trucks and other vehicles serving Jordanian trade and commerce.

Given the fact that the volume of passenger traffic is not sufficient to make the running of trains economical, the ministry's interest should be expanded to include freight as well. In this context we must be familiar with the economic ramifications of the peace regime in the Middle East in order to determine the direction of Jordanian traffic be it freight or people. If Jordan chooses to establish links with Mediterranean ports in Israel, then this factor needs to be considered well in advance of any major rail construction in the country. We also must know the kind of trade and commerce that could develop between us and our northern neighbours, mainly Syria and Turkey, before we decide to develop that sector. If establishing an economical transport link with Europe is our final destination, then we need to know whether such a link can be better arranged through Mediterranean ports or through land transport systems across Syria and Turkey.

These and other considerations need to be studied before we could have the kind of sophisticated rail service that the ministry is thinking of. The study already completed by the Austrian Railway Engineering Company, which was paid for by the Austrian government, is certainly an important element in the comprehensive scheme that should be devised. Perhaps the same parties can undertake the other complementary aspects of the national railroad projects including the southern and western sectors. This way we might be able to ensure that the job is done better and faster.

Arabic Press Commentaries

A writer for Al Ra'i daily hailed the results of the Palestinian elections, saying that these elections boosted the democratic atmosphere in the whole region. Having secured the favourable testimony of the international observers, headed by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who spoke highly of the election process, the elections constituted a first step towards the creation of a democratic state in Palestine, said Fahd Al Fanek. Indeed the Palestinian elections are to be considered as one of very few elections that have ever been held in the Arab World, which were truly described by world observers to have been free and fair, said the writer. The world observers' testimony that the Palestine National Authority (PNA) has handled the elections with skill, despite the alleged slight irregularities, should urge the PNA and the newly elected legislative council to embark on democratic steps and open a new chapter in the life of the Palestinian people, said the writer. This he said can be manifested in refraining from any arbitrary measures or harassments against journalists or ordinary citizens and ensuring human rights for all people. Noting that even the Israeli leaders have hailed the election results as paving the ground for the emergence of a democratic state neighbouring Israel, the writer said that the PNA is now expected to keep up the good work and prove by deed, rather than word, that the Palestinian people truly deserve the admiration that they won for themselves from the rest of the world.

A writer for Al Dustour dwelt on the results of the mid-year tawjihi examinations, saying that they were clearly below all expectations. The fact that only 34 per cent of the students who took the literary stream examinations passed, proves that there is something terribly wrong with the school systems which are run by the Ministry of Education, said Fakhri Kavar. The ministry might have achieved successes in dealing with illiteracy or expanding basic education to all parts of the country but the tawjihi results overshadow all the other achievements, said the writer. The literary stream students could not be of lower mental faculty than their colleagues in the scientific and the other streams which showed better results, and therefore their poor performance in the mid-year examination is a clear sign that the fault lies with the system, the teaching methods or probably the syllabus, added the writer.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Palestinian elections are historic, but not a novelty and not necessarily fully representative

THE ELECTIONS that the Palestinians held in the West Bank and Gaza Strip last week were indeed historic in that it was the first realistic step towards Palestinian nationhood. The future of the Palestinian entity, however, depends on how Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who has been elected president, and the self-rule council dominated by his Fatah movement, conducts the negotiations with Israel.

There appear to be several misconceptions inside and outside the occupied territories on some of the aspects of the elections. From our vantage point in Jordan, there are three distinct factors that stand out:

— The elections have been described as the first polls that the Palestinians went to. With all due respects to those who have given this label to the polls, let us recall that the Palestinian residents of the West Bank did go to the polls for the first time in 1950 and eight times thereafter until 1967 to elect representatives to the 60-member Jordanian Parliament, where the West Bank had 30 seats.

In total, they elected 129 people to serve in the Jordanian Parliament — many of them repeatedly in all elections and hence the number is lower than the actual 240 seats that the West Bank held in the legislature between 1950 and 1967.

Jerusalem residents elected 25 deputies during that period. Bethlehem 17, Hebron 21, Nablus 19, Jenin 19, Tulkarim 16, and Ramallah 18.

The legislative elections, coupled with the university and professional union elections that were held in the West Bank after 1950, as well as after Israel occupied the territory in 1967, had given the Palestinians fairly good experience with the process of exercising their right to elect representatives. Quite simply, the Jan. 20 elections were not the first they took part in.

— By no measure of imagination could it be said that the newly elected Palestinian council represents the Palestinian nation. We have to take into consideration that five million Palestinians live outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip and those who went to the polls on Jan. 20 represented only the two million plus residents of the territories (even at that, there is a segment of the Palestinian popula-

tion in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which did not want to have anything to do with the self-rule elections).

Of course, that is not to question the legitimacy of the new council. We all know that it is difficult to envisage an election in the short term that encompasses the entire Palestinian population in the Middle East let alone the rest of the world.

— The very limitations imposed on the Palestinians by Israel draws the carpet from under the feet of the argument that the newly elected council is the legislature of the Palestinians. Under the Oslo agreement, any legislation-like decision taken by the self-rule council during the three years of its term should have Israeli approval before it can be implemented. As such, the new council is much less than a full legislative body but definitely much higher in power than just a municipal council.

We have all admiration and support for the quest of the Palestinian people for democracy as a way of life, and we wish them all luck.

Without reflecting on our best wishes for our Palestinian brethren, we would like to correct some of the "judgments" passed by self-assumed experts on the overall conduct of the Palestinian elections.

We are being told that the Palestinian elections were the most democratic in the Arab World. Is it very accurate?

Let us remind those who assume such a position that we in Jordan went to the polls in 1989, after a hiatus of more than 32 years, and again in 1993. Nowhere during the two elections did any ballot box go missing or any results reversed twice or thrice in less than 48 hours and candidates being told at 10 p.m. that they won and at 8 a.m. that they lost.

Did our policemen and security personnel keeping guard ask voters entering the polling booths to vote for anybody?

Was any voter threatened or intimidated for voicing in public his or her choice of a candidate? Was anyone thrown out of his/her job because he/she did not tow the line of a given candidate?

Let us be realistic. The Palestinian elections were indeed historic, but please do not elevate them above the experi-

ence of us Jordanians who are proud of our record of democratic, fair and free elections.

The reaffirmation of the Jordanian stand by our foreign minister, Abdul Karim Kabariti, in Gaza on Thursday that it is premature to discuss the future relationship between Jordanians and Palestinians is no accident. It was a reminder to the Palestinians themselves and the world at large that Jordan does not have any secret agenda for the Palestinian territories.

There are of course sceptics and vested interests who continue to propagate the theory of Jordanian ambitions in the territories. The Palestinian elections themselves should serve as a reminder to those sceptics and vested interests that the future of the Palestinian nation is in the hands of the Palestinian people themselves and their negotiating skills with the Israelis when the final status talks begin in May.

We in Jordan stand to help our Palestinian brethren in whatever way we can without involving ourselves in the internal affairs of the Palestinian people. This is a reality that the Palestinians as well as all others concerned should accept.

At the same time, the unique relationship that binds the Jordanians and the Palestinians gives us the privileged right to remind the newly elected council and its head that high-handedness would not serve the interests of the Palestinian people.

Now that Yasser Arafat and the Fatah have secured a mandate from the people, they should stay away from resorting to the tactics of a police state and that they could start by first dismantling the six different security organs that Mr. Arafat used extensively to consolidate his control of power.

With the 83.1 per cent vote that he got in the elections, Mr. Arafat should be comfortable and secure enough to continue to lead the Palestinian decision-making process without having security men going around intimidating those who oppose his approach. And if Mr. Arafat does not feel comfortable without such tactics, then the Palestinian people are in serious trouble.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Palestinian elections should open the way to democracy, strengthen peace

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

The Palestinian elections and their results drew the attention of most writers in the local press in the past week. The peace process, Arab affairs and domestic issues were also given prominence by columnists and in the editorials. A writer in Al Ra'i daily said that the success of the elections paved the ground for an independent Palestinian state whose people have chosen the path of democracy and pluralism. Ahmad Mislleh said that the interest of the world community, and especially the Western nations, in these elections reflects the world's keenness on backing the peace process in the region and shows that the elections were not a mere internal Palestinian affair but rather an important issue of international dimensions.

Voicing criticism of the Palestinian elections, Samih Maaitah said in Al Dustour that the elections were "mere implementation of the Oslo and Cairo agreements which were opposed by a large sector of the Palestinian people under Israeli rule."

The elections law was drawn up by the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and the Fatah group and the elections were steered in a way to achieve the aspired end, resembling internal elections within the Fatah movement itself, said the writer.

He said that the winners faced no real rivalry from the opposition groups who have stayed away from the elections.

In the view of Mohammad Kharoub, a columnist for Al Ra'i, the results of the elections proved that the winners were the Fatah group who secured 75 per cent of the seats in the legislative council.

The outcome has also proved that the Hamas movement and the other opposition groups were the main losers and not only those who ran but failed to get sufficient votes; it also proved that the leftist

groups, though some of them won seats in the council, were also losers to a certain degree because they had hoped to gather more power in the Palestinian council.

Mohammad Subeithi, a writer for Al Dustour, said that the Palestinians have contributed towards the construction of Jordan and other Arab states, and the time has come for the Arabs to help them build their institutions and lay

dements before such a resolution can be taken.

Now that the elections have ended, the members of the legislative council should lose no time in convening a meeting that would declare the independent Palestinian state, something which the electorate is expecting them to do, said Nawaf Zaru in Al Dustour, adding that the voters also want the council to pursue the negotiations with Israel on the

wants them to scrap the old Palestinian charter which calls for the destruction of Israel but they should also bear in mind that such a move cannot be taken without a reciprocal act on the part of Israel which still refuses to repatriate the refugees and continues to hold on to the Jewish settlements in Arab territory.

In an editorial, Al Ra'i daily discussed the Jordanian-Palestinian relations, hailing the official opening

again bring about unity between the two peoples.

Saleh Qallab, a writer for Al Dustour, said that the Arab World realises that Iraq's defeat in the second Gulf war meant an actual defeat for the whole nation.

He said it is time for the revival of the Iraqi nation and this can come gradually in light of the present situation in the international arena.

Iraq should accept U.N.

that appear in their children.

Safe births should be the target and Health Ministry rules for premarriage health tests are necessary if the young couples want to avoid untold sufferings later on, said the writer.

Some families allow their youths to marry cousins in order to prevent the land and other inherited real estates from going to other families and so they give preference to wealth over health.

Therefore, he said, the Health Ministry should not be content with only giving advice to people to undergo pre-marriage tests but should also enact a law that bans close relatives from marrying as this could cause untold sufferings and harm the national economy because of the unproductive, life-long dependent, handicapped offshoots.

Fahd Fanek, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that Jordan's main trading partners are Palestine, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and, in the era of peace, Israel, and therefore Jordan's foreign policy should be geared in a manner that would ensure Jordan's continued access to these countries' markets.

The writer said that despite the smallness of the Palestinian markets, the Kingdom is expected to export \$200 million-worth of products to Palestine annually.

Iraq is the main market for Jordanian goods and efforts should be made to guarantee the trade relations with Baghdad, said the writer.

Saudi Arabia is also another trade partner for Jordan, although the trade balance with Riyadh is in favour of Saudi Arabia, he argued.

As to Israel, the writer said that Jordan can gain access to its markets when it abides by internationally accepted specifications and standards as to the quality of its goods, adding that the lack of similarity in the nature of Israeli and Jordanian goods should open the way for vast opportunities for trade exchanges between the two sides.

M. KAHIL



the infrastructure for their success.

He said that Jordanians from all walks of life are ready to offer assistance and participate in the reconstruction process and they should be allowed the chance to do that and prove the unique relationship between the people on both sides of the River Jordan.

Noting that the Israelis have now opened the door to the members of the Palestine National Council to return home and help pass a resolution scrapping a clause in the Palestinian charter calling for the destruction of the Jewish state, the writer said that these members should also submit requests for the dismantling of the Jewish set-

final phase which should see the end of settlements and the repatriation of the displaced Palestinians.

At the same time, he said the PNA is expected to live up to its pledges and honour its commitments by allowing free expression, and guarantee human rights which are essential elements of democracy.

Ahmad Arafat, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that the PNA and the new legislative council should direct their attention to the five million Palestinians living in the diaspora when they embark on the final phase of the negotiations with the Israeli leaders.

The Palestinian leaders should realise that Israel

of the Jordanian representation office in Gaza and the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's planned visit to Amman as determined moves on the part of the Palestinians and Jordanians to uphold their unique relationship and work towards real unity.

The paper said that the past few years required that Jordan officially, at least, freeze its formal ties with the West Bank in order to allow the Palestinians to pursue their efforts and continue the struggle to achieve independence.

It said that it would be natural now for the two sides to embark on essential steps that would once

Security Council Resolution 986 which allows it to sell oil in order to import food and medicine because such a step would enable the Iraqis to survive and rebuild their institutions, said the writer.

Those who call on the Iraqis to reject the resolution do not feel the actual plight of the Iraqi people and the suffering of their children, he argued.

The writer said that once the Iraqis recover from this war, the whole Arab Nation will regain health and self-respect.

Taber Adwan, a writer for Al Dustour, appealed to the people of Jordan to give up intermarrying in order to avoid many of the disabilities and handicaps

Dissident Serb radio gives a voice to Karadzic critics

By Jovan Kovacic
Teaser

BANJA LUKA — As Bosnian Serb "President" Radovan Karadzic battles for political survival, few things advertise his loosening grip so impudently as Radio Krajina.

Serbs who feel betrayed by Karadzic and his tough-out policy with his Muslim foes or international mediators, use the Banja Luka-based army radio as a megaphone of dissent.

Military officers, professionals and ordinary Serbs call its phone-in programmes to denounce the government tactics that alienated former allies in Belgrade, provoked North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) bombing and led to military defeat in western Bosnia.

Only a few months ago, such political heresy would have been impossible.

Mr. Karadzic and his coterie of hardliners, ruling from a mountain eyrie in Pale outside Sarajevo, muzzled criticism with tight control of the mainly broadcast media.

Bosnian Serbs were fed a defiant propaganda diet saying all was well — except for a little unfortunate incompetence on the part of the army — even though the outside world could see that Pale's political control was crumbling. Radio Krajina sprang

from the army's fury at Mr. Karadzic's attempts to blame it for military defeats and to sack General Ratko Mladic as its commander last year.

Banja Luka politicians, hostile to the Pale leaders and their brutal siege of Sarajevo which undermined the Serbs' image abroad, colluded as a way of escaping Mr. Karadzic's censorship.

Gen. Mladic, a tough professional soldier, always jibbed at taking orders from Mr. Karadzic who, although he is nominally supreme commander of the army, has no military expertise.

The Bosnian Serb leadership and the army split irrevocably early last year when the politicians, fearing they might have to account for black market fortunes many have made, refused to give Gen. Mladic the martial law powers he claimed he needed.

Within months, the army was suffering the defeats it had predicted in western and northwest Bosnia and was unable to help rebel Serb allies who were being overwhelmed by the Croatian army next door.

When Mr. Karadzic responded by trying to fire Gen. Mladic, his general staff humiliated him by rebelling and another consequence was the founding of Radio Krajina.

Its appearance last September was dramatic. Serb

refugees were fleeing to Banja Luka as a Muslim-Croat offensive across a wide front devoured their homes in northwest Bosnia.

"The official media were reporting nothing about the blitzkrieg and its silence reinforced the panic of the people converging on Banja Luka, so we thought it was time to do something," said one local official.

The government in Pale, desperate to hide the extent of the rout, refused to let Banja Luka Mayor Predrag Radic use the official radio to explain what was happening.

Mr. Radic turned to the army, broadcasting on the new Radio Krajina, to calm his people's nerves but also to criticise his enemies in Pale.

Banja Luka, an industrial centre and the biggest town in Bosnian Serb territory, was a natural home for the radio.

Long a centre of anti-Karadzic sentiment, its political leaders are close to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic who finally forced Mr. Karadzic to accept the Bosnia peace deal.

The town sees itself as a future Bosnian Serb capital and Mr. Radic is a contender to replace Mr. Karadzic who, with Gen. Mladic, has been indicted by the United Nations on war crimes charges and must relinquish power

under the peace agreement.

Mr. Karadzic immediately tried to shut Radio Krajina and his information minister, accusing the Banja Luka Serbs of treachery, called it "Ustashe Radio" — echoing a derogatory Serb name for Croats.

A radio source who would not be identified said: "I went from general to general, soldier to soldier and asked them if we should get off the air. They all said no. We kept (Banja Luka's) defence lines steady and at least everyone knew where they were."

When the radio heard that police loyal to Mr. Karadzic might launch a raid, it appealed to listeners for support.

"We went on the air with that and you should have heard the calls back," the source said. "The telephones overheated and people said there would be 50,000 of them to defend us."

The radio, broadcasting for 14 hours a day, says it is a platform for all shades of opinion — Banja Luka alone has 20 political parties — but the attacks on Mr. Karadzic and his supporters have been vitriolic.

It is expected to be a voice for change in elections due within nine months when the ruling SDS party, shorn of its leader because of the war crimes charges, will face a severe challenge.

Chirac N-tests eerily echo first French blast in 1960

By Alistair Doyle
Reuter

PARIS — "Hurrah for France," President Charles de Gaulle cheered on the day France carried out its first nuclear weapons test over the Sahara in 1960. "Since this morning it is stronger and prouder."

Thirty-six years after that February 13 explosion in Algeria, President Jacques Chirac is preparing what will probably be France's last atomic test. Like de Gaulle, he faces outrage abroad but has avoided the same defiant triumphalism.

Then as now, France is defying a U.N. resolution and a moratorium by other nuclear powers. Both in 1960 and 1996, Paris sought to assure sceptical allies that its nuclear arms would serve Europe's interests.

De Gaulle's atmospheric test, described as a "huge ball of bluish fire with an orange-red centre" by an official observer, brought howls of protest, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Ghana expressed "horror" and froze French assets. A Moroccan newspaper branded it "the most odious crime of the century" and Rabat withdrew its ambassador from Paris. In Damascus, thousands of students took to the streets in protest.

The test broke a moratorium on nuclear weapons testing by the nuclear powers of the time — the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain. It had been in force since 1958 alongside an ill-fated conference in Geneva aimed at outlawing nuclear tests.

In an almost eerie parallel, France's resumption of tests in September last year violated a moratorium by all official nuclear powers except China. In Geneva, a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is being



Jacques Chirac

negotiated.

In 1960, the United States and Britain did not criticise France but Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev expressed "regret". The test had been widely expected, partly because France had sealed off part of the Sahara and rerouted air traffic.

The blast set Paris at odds with the United Nations, which had adopted a resolution urging France to refrain from testing.

And 12 years before the foundation of environmental group Greenpeace that has sought to disrupt Chirac's underground tests in the south Pacific, protesters tried to reach the test site.

About 20 people, from Ghana, Nigeria, the United States, France and Britain, marched north from Ghana planning to stop the test or die as martyrs in the desert blast.

They were stopped in upper Volta, now Burkina Faso, because they had no visas.

The focus of protests at Chirac's blasts has switched to nations around the Pacific with the shift of the nuclear weapons test site to French Polynesia in 1966. All tests since 1975 have been underground.

Mr. Chirac has said France will end the series

of explosions, which ended a 1992 moratorium declared by his socialist predecessor Francois Mitterrand, by the end of February and then sign the test ban treaty.

Mr. Mitterrand, who left office in May, died of cancer on Jan. 8 aged 79.

Mr. Chirac has conducted five tests so far and said France would probably stop at six with an option for a seventh.

As in 1960, the U.N. general assembly has urged an end to nuclear testing in a vote aimed at France and China. And as in 1960, France insists its blasts will not jeopardise talks to end atomic tests.

De Gaulle said: "France is in a better position to take effective action for the conclusion of agreements between the atomic powers with a view to nuclear disarmament."

The Soviet ambassador at the Geneva anti-test talks was among those who said the argument was hard to follow.

Despite similarities, de Gaulle gained far more defying criticism in 1960 than Mr. Chirac has in the 1990s.

The first blast admitted France to the elite club of the two superpowers and Britain, the main victors of

World War II, and reasserted France's independent military might after a humiliating occupation by Nazi Germany.

De Gaulle, who led the resistance to Hitler, spoke of a "magnificent success" in a telegram to his minister for atomic energy that began "hurrah for France".

The newspaper Le Monde wrote approvingly the following day: "This success was greeted with satisfaction by most political parties, with the exception of the extreme left."

In August 1995, the same newspaper urged Mr. Chirac to abandon his test plans, saying that would be "less damaging to Mr. Chirac than obstinately continuing on a path that is isolating France."

Opinion polls showed most French voters opposed Chirac's test. He has said the nuclear arsenal may not be reliable in 15 years' time unless final checks are made.

The French bomb still causes controversy in Europe.

Mr. Chirac has said France is willing to discuss widening the French nuclear umbrella to the European Union (EU) but there is little enthusiasm among Paris's partners, who continue to have the assurance of a U.S. nuclear shield through NATO.

In 1960, de Gaulle said: "Thanks to a single-handed national effort, France is now able to strengthen its defensive capacity, as well of that of the (European) community and the West."

The conservative newspaper le Figaro wondered in an editorial on Feb. 14, 1960 how a shared defence might work: "Joint production in the framework of Europe or NATO... the right of use reserved to each country, or to a combination of countries?"

Political row in Israel over settlement plan

TEL AVIV (R) — A political row has erupted in Israel over a report that its housing minister was seeking to build a town for ultra-orthodox Jews in the occupied West Bank.

Israel's Channel Two television said Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer wanted to build a town called Matityahu about 30 kilometres west of Jerusalem in a bid to win backing for the government from ultra-orthodox political parties.

"The ultra-orthodox community in Israel is suffering from a severe housing shortage and it is therefore our duty to take care of them as we take care of any other Israeli citizen," Mr. Ben-Eliezer said in a Channel Two interview.

His comments drew immediate fire from Tourism Minister Uzi Baram, like Mr. Ben-Eliezer a member of Prime Minister Shimon Peres's Labour Party, and Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, who belongs to Labour's coalition partner Meretz.

"This is a totally stupid idea. Is this the right time to establish a new city in the territories?" Mr. Baram said. "The problem we are facing right now is what to do with the cities that are already there."

Mr. Sarid, asked by army radio about the television re-

port, responded with incredulity.

"Are you sure you are not joking — the housing minister sometimes has a sense of humour," Mr. Sarid said, before lashing into his Labour coalition partner.

"If the Labour Party is deciding something behind our back then we will turn our back towards it," Mr. Sarid said. "If the ultra-orthodox have a housing problem... let them build what they need but under no circumstances in (the West Bank). It is very simple — Matityahu will not rise."

Channel Two said Mr. Ben Eliezer was pushing to convene a ministerial committee on housing to approve the plans.

The report was aired while Mr. Peres was on a one-day visit to Germany.

Under its peace deals with the Palestinians, Israel has handed over six West Bank towns and hundreds of villages to Palestinian self-rule.

But it has said it would proceed with plans to build Jewish housing in Arab East Jerusalem, which it regards as part of its "capital".

Foreign Minister Ehud Barak has outlined a policy whereby Israel would aim to hold on to wide areas of the West Bank under any permanent peace plan with the Palestinians.

Arafat due in Amman today

(Continued from page 1)

said. Mr. Kabiriti said he and Mr. Arafat agreed to set up a permanent committee to monitor Jordanian-Palestinian relations.

In Cairo, Mr. Mubarak and Mr. Arafat will discuss the final phase of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations when they meet here Saturday, Foreign Minister Amr Musa said.

"The two leaders will discuss the 'full range of issues concerning relations between Palestinians and Israelis, especially preparations for the start of the final phase of negotiations," due to begin in May.

These talks, to be completed within three years, will decide the final status of the Palestinian territories and Jerusalem.

international border drawn in 1923 and in effect until 1948. The area between the two lines, which includes the eastern side of the lake and its springs, was taken by Syria in 1948. Israel in turn seized the entire plateau in the 1967 Middle East war before "annexing" it in 1981.

Mr. Barak also said on military radio Thursday that Israel would "insist that every cubic metre of water from the lake remain under its control."

A senior Israeli Labour Party official slammed Washington's negotiating methods in trying to broker a peace accord between Israel and Syria saying the talks were bogged down.

"We are not very happy with the role played so far by the Americans," said Labour Party Secretary General Nissim Zvili.

"If the Americans had taken part in the negotiations with the Palestinians we would never have reached an accord, because they are too direct, too straight, they don't understand Middle Eastern things," Mr. Zvili told journalists during a brief stopover in Paris.

"It is very difficult to continue negotiating like this... we are floundering," he added.

Mr. Zvili said the Israeli government would decide in mid-February whether to bring forward general elections depending on the out-

On the occasion of the
Republic Day of India

Al Karmel Travel & Tourism/the sales agent for Air India

conveys its hearty greeting to the government and the Indian people

Militants attack train in Egypt; one killed

ASSIUT (R) — An elderly Egyptian was killed on Friday when suspected militants opened fire on a passenger train that often carries tourists in southern Egypt, security sources said.

It was not clear if there were any tourists on board the train, which was heading north from Aswan to Cairo, when it was hit near Al Roda village in Minya province, about 260 kilometres south of Cairo.

Pharmacist Alfonso Nashed Wassef, 72, who was wounded when bullets broke the windows of a carriage in the front of the train, died in hospital in the provincial capital Minya city.

The train continued its journey to Cairo.

Police in Minya believe the gunmen were members of the militant Gamaa Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group), which has targeted policemen, Christians and tourists in Egypt as part of its anti-government campaign.

Militants attacked four

trains in southern Egypt last November, killing an Egyptian train worker and wounding three tourists and 12 Egyptians.

The Gamaa, which advised tourists last year to leave the country for their own safety, attacks trains carrying tourists to or from the pharaonic sites in Luxor and Aswan in the south as a way to reduce the government's income from tourism.

More than 910 people have been killed in political violence in Egypt since militants launched their anti-government campaign in 1992.

The level of violence has fallen in the past year and President Hosni Mubarak told a gathering to celebrate police day on Thursday that his police force was winning the battle against the militants.

Meanwhile, Egyptian authorities on Thursday released 117 jailed militants as part of an amnesty to coincide with the Holy Month of Ramadan.

EVEN MORE



World bodies say reforms are key to Arab growth

By Saleiman Al Khalidi
Reuter

AMMAN — The Middle East, the world's only region where per capita exports have dropped in the past decade, must destroy trade barriers and integrate with the rest of the world's economy if it is to flourish in the next century.

Arab countries have reserves of capital and labour but protectionism and tariff

barriers are robbing them of the chance to succeed, financial analysts say.

The alternative to stronger economic links with the rest of the world is rising unemployment, falling incomes and a growing risk of social unrest. But international financial institutions which are promoting economic reform are wary of political sensitivities and tread carefully in pushing advice.

Formidable resistance to

reforms comes from vested interests such as domestic producers, public sector workers, managers in state-owned industries and corrupt bureaucrats.

"Inevitably those kind of forces have got to be dealt with by the political leadership, and that of course is one of the reasons why you find very different speeds of reform in different countries," the World Bank's chief economist for the re-

gion John Page said. "Many governments are coming to the conclusion that if you do not start soon, the costs of dealing with these entrenched interests begin to rise and the costs for the people who are not in the interest groups mount to almost intolerable levels," he added.

The IMF and World Bank say North Africa and the Middle East are potentially rich — the combined region

has highly-skilled manpower. \$350-\$600 billion of capital held abroad and a GDP of over \$600 billion. But they concede opening to world markets will have a cost.

"Inevitably, some industries are going to suffer and some are going to prosper," Mr. Page said. "One of the key issues all governments confront... is how one creates mechanisms by which you ease the pain of the loser and thereby free up the opportu-

nities for the winners." Mr. Page added: "Productivity in this region has declined by 0.2 per cent per year, so there is a very large productivity gap opening up between the region and its potential competitors."

World Bank economists say the region is the only one where per capita exports have declined since 1980, both because of low world oil prices and weak growth in non-traditional exports.

"If petroleum products and derivatives are taken away, there is virtually no progress at all in diversification of exports," Mr. Page said. "Most of the countries of the region remain, with the exception of those in the Gulf, quite closed by international standards."

Stanley Fischer, first deputy managing director of the IMF, said the process would be less painful if Arab states gradually lifted trade barriers, a prerequisite for integration with the world economy.

"We have never urged a country to get rid of its tariffs immediately. It's always done over a period of time," said Mr. Fischer.

"Ultimately the countries that have been successful in economic reforms have had very dynamic leaderships with a high priority on economic growth," Mr. Page said.

The alternative is bleak. The World Bank official presented a scenario of stagnant growth, per capita incomes falling 1.0-1.5 per cent per year, and higher unemployment which would "release social forces that will become very, very difficult for existing governments to manage."

Egypt, for instance, needs to create half a million jobs annually until 2000 to absorb new labour entrants and make a modest reduction in unemployment.

"Governments can have short-run stability by not making changes, but that short-run stability over time puts the region further and further behind," Mr. Fischer said.

But he believes the region will take the path of reform: "It's coming — the integration of the region with the world economy. It brings economic advantages, it should be done, it's hard to resist."

AFM expected to go on downward spiral next week

By a Jordan Times staff Reporter

AMMAN — Turnover went up and prices dipped a little at the Jordanian stock market last week on annual performance figures of several companies, but the rise in turnover was checked with news that Jordan was halving its exports of food and medicine in return for oil to Iraq, brokers said Friday.

They said prices should have gone up, as every year towards the end of January, but the gains by companies announcing annual figures were set back on the official index because of the drops suffered by firms whose main market was Iraq.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) said trading for the week ending Thursday was 4.8 million dinars compared with 2.3 million dinars in the previous week.

Two million shares changed hands during the week under 2,328 transactions involving stocks of 90 companies. When business closed for the week, 30 firms had gained, 44 had slipped and 16 remained unchanged, the report said.

The official AFM index based on 60 major companies from among the 120 listed in the market closed at 152.5 points, down one point, or 0.6 per cent, the report said.

Official sources said Monday that Jordan was reducing its food and medicine exports to Iraq in return for Iraqi oil from an annual volume of

(Continued on page 9)

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Private matters are not pleasing, but do not confide in others today, handle them well and all will be fine.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) This is a good day to clarify your aims, and then go after them in a positive manner instead of a haphazard one.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good day to keep any promises you have made and not try to make a big impression in the outside world.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You think that by doing something drastic you can get ideas across much better, but this is not the case.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your hunches are apt to be not so good today, so rely on your good judgement. Be particularly kind with the one you love.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Stop analysing and criticising friends' motives today or you can get into trouble. Some contract you want to make will not last long.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good day to rest and not do all those tasks you have in mind, so put it off for now. Plan a better wardrobe for yourself.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Don't get into expensive pleasures which you can't afford, but be content with simple and wholesome ones.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get your home improved today so that it is more charming, smooth-running and functional in the event that guests arrive.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are not sure about some philosophy of life, but if you study it further it clarifies itself and you will benefit.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get busy improving your home and forget financial and other practical matters for today. Keep the status quo.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Think out how to gain your most cherished personal aims today, and then start wheels rolling in the right direction.

Birthingstone of January: Garnet-Rose Quartz

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN
TELEPHONE: 637111 / 407119
UNORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (26/01/1996 - 26/01/1996)
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME TRADING VOLUME PREV. OPENING CLOSING PRICE PRICE PRICE PRICE

ARAB BANK	1,777,270	23.000	23.000	23.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	11,247	4.450	4.450	4.450
CATRO AMMAN BANK	45,705	4.500	4.500	4.500
BANK OF JORDAN	10,000	3.630	3.630	3.630
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	3,300	1.220	1.220	1.220
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	57,777	2.020	2.020	2.020
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK/NEW	4,450	2.350	2.350	2.350
THE HOUSING BANK	14,166	4.730	4.730	4.730
JORDAN RUMAIT BANK	520	2.730	2.730	2.730
JORDAN GULF BANK	165,310	1.040	1.040	1.040
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	950	3.850	3.850	3.850
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	27,822	3.430	3.430	3.430
BUSINESS BANK	794	3.180	3.180	3.180
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	19,405	3.510	3.510	3.510
BEIR ELAVI SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	9,970	3.100	3.100	3.100
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	60,331	0.850	0.850	0.850
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	49,766	1.370	1.370	1.370

BANKS SECTOR 271466 INDEX NUMBER: 155.73 CHANGE: -0.137

GENERAL ARABIA INSURANCE 426,959 1.040 1.040 1.040

JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE 1,628 2.740 2.740 2.740

JORDAN GULF INSURANCE 37,701 4.760 4.760 4.760

INSURANCE SECTOR 260930 INDEX NUMBER: 125.20 CHANGE: -0.054

JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER 119,057 1.870 1.870 1.870

JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM 4,800 9.000 9.000 9.000

IRAB DISTRICT ELECTRICITY 19,031 1.260 1.260 1.260

JORDAN RIVER MINERAL 502 2.300 2.300 2.300

ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS 2,009 5.400 5.400 5.400

JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES 10,276 2.570 2.570 2.570

NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES 19,995 1.880 1.880 1.880

REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT 4,943 0.970 0.970 0.970

JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER 1,540 1.080 1.080 1.080

MAJIDIAN HOTEL, RESTAURANT & NIGHTCLUB 1,251 0.700 0.700 0.700

UNION MIDDLE EAST & CONDOMINIUM HOTELS 12,281 2.130 2.130 2.130

ARAB ENTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION 22,300 3.420 3.420 3.420

SARMA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY 7,421 1.210 1.210 1.210

UNION CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS. 37,446 2.210 2.210 2.210

ARAB LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP. 5,874 0.590 0.590 0.590

SERVICES SECTOR 271466 INDEX NUMBER: 125.81 CHANGE: -0.273

JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES 420 21.000 21.000 21.000

ATTAKREF CORP. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING 1,800 1.200 1.200 1.200

THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES 164,807 3.400 3.400 3.400

JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES 8,325 3.240 3.240 3.240

THE ARAB POTASH 9,529 5.350 5.350 5.350

JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY 49,524 9.820 9.820 9.820

JORDAN TANNING 1,305 7.100 7.100 7.100

WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES 70 1.400 1.400 1.400

THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL 18,000 3.650 3.650 3.650

THE JORDAN WORKED MILLS 2,498 7.590 7.590 7.590

ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING 72,984 4.950 4.950 4.950

JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES 9,394 6.100 6.100 6.100

JORDAN DAIRY 3,570 2.580 2.580 2.580

THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING 2,723 2.330 2.330 2.330

JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES 766 3.900 3.900 3.900

THE PUBLIC KITCHEN 280 2.910 2.910 2.910

ARAB CHEMICALS, DETERGENTS INDUSTRIES 1,160 12.200 12.200 12.200

RAVIA INDUSTRIES 7,469 2.340 2.340 2.340

DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT 33,835 7.150 7.150 7.150

ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY 30,195 5.350 5.350 5.350

LIVESTOCK & POULTRY 32,786 0.550 0.550 0.550

ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING

NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY 11,966 1.390 1.390 1.390

NATIONAL INDUSTRIES 12,647 1.410 1.410 1.410

INTERMEDIATE PERO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES 11,583 1.420 1.420 1.420

JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES 9,100 1.050 1.050 1.050

NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING 1,452 3.750 3.750 3.750

ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS 7,643 1.690 1.690 1.690

UNIVERSAL HOUSING INDUSTRIES 45,896 1.280 1.280 1.280

JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO. 58,459 1.860 1.860 1.860

JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY 14,392 1.370 1.370 1.370

EL-RAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO. 47,557 2.240 2.240 2.240

INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES 43,770 1.360 1.360 1.360

UNION CHEMICAL & VACUUMABLE OIL INDUSTRY 11,358 1.540 1.540 1.540

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR 753718 INDEX NUMBER: 121.70 CHANGE: -0.213

PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (26/01/1996 - 26/01/1996)
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME TRADING VOLUME PREV. OPENING CLOSING PRICE PRICE PRICE PRICE

CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE 22,741 0.490 0.490 0.490

JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES 212,960 0.750 0.750 0.750

ARAB FIB. CO. 42,467 0.930 0.930 0.930

UNION INVESTMENT CORP. 501 33,428 0.860 0.860 0.860

ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES 1,145 0.740 0.740 0.740

ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE 1,144 0.810 0.810 0.810

JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MANUFACTURING 6,162 0.300 0.300 0.300

NATIONAL CHLORINE INDUSTRIES CO. LTD 26,288 1.670 1.670 1.670

NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS IND. CO 3,405 0.880 0.880 0.880

WATKIN DIES & MACHINES 720 0.730 0.730 0.730

HD PHARMIA 1,355 0.770 0.770 0.770

JORDAN STEEL 17,398 0.940 0.940 0.940

ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES 896 0.700 0.700 0.700

UNION TOBACCO 10,986 1.250 1.250 1.250

SAZI PHARMACEUTICALS 40,072 0.750 0.750 0.750

INDUSTRIES ENGINEERING 6,759 0.740 0.740 0.740

INDUSTRIAL CERAMIC 47,533 1.410 1.410 1.410

TEXTILE MANUFACTURING 5,849 0.500 0.500 0.500

SAGI SARTARY PAPER CONVERTING 800 0.780 0.780 0.780

NATIONAL POLYMER COA 10,102 0.800 0.800 0.800

NATIONAL EAST COMPLEX 47,432 0.940 0.940 0.940

NATIONAL POLYMER ENG. IND. CO. 46,947 0.910 0.910 0.910

GRAND TOTAL 594553

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MEHRY

TUBIL

TANFUL

GURDIT

Answer: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: OXIDE YEARN SLUCE TUSSE

Answer: How the millionaire made his fortune — WITH DOLLARS AND SENSE

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

GLASBERGEN

"From now on, I'll make the salad — Cap'n Crunch is not the same as croutons!"

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Share prices likely to fall

(Continued from page 8)

\$400 million to \$200 million and would not be sending goods to its eastern neighbor, whose debts to the

Kingdom had mounted to \$1.2 billion.

Many Jordanian industries depend on Iraq as their main market and the cut in exports under the annual trade pro-

toocol between the two countries would serious affect some of the firms whose entire output is sent to the Iraqi market.

The AFM report said banks and financial institutions accounted for 2.6 million dinars of the weekly turnover, followed by industri-

als with 1.04 million dinars, insurance stocks with 970,000 dinars and service sector firms with 580,000 dinars.

Separate sectoral indices showed that commercial banks and financial institutions gained 1.1 per cent and

industrials by 0.2 per cent. The services sector dipped by 0.3 per cent and insurance 0.1 per cent.

AFM brokers predicted Thursday that the market would go on a downward spiral this week as the "real impact," as one of them put

it, of the cut in trade with Iraq hits the bourse.

"Considering that \$200 million of exports represents more than 15 per cent of Jordan's total exports, the cut in sales of Jordanian products to Iraq is quite significant on a national scale," noted one

broker.

Furthermore, noted the broker, many trading companies had millions of dollars worth of mainly sugar, rice and milk powder stocked up in Jordan's free zone for sale to Iraq.

"Those companies are

going to suffer not only liquidity problems but serious losses if they are unable to make the sales to Iraq," said the broker. "This is definitely going to have an additional impact on the stock market, given that funds available in the bourse are limited."

JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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Financial Markets

In co-operation with **Cairo Amman Bank**

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 25/1/1996

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7050	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0727	1.0781
Deutsche Mark	0.4792	0.4816
Swiss Franc	0.5966	0.5996
French Franc	0.1399	0.1406
Japanese Yen	0.6652	0.6665
Dutch Guilder	0.4281	0.4302
Swedish Krona	0.4446	0.4448
Italian Lira	0.0446	0.0448
Belgian Franc	0.0446	0.0448

Other Currencies Date: 25/1/1996

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8620	1.8780
Lebanese Lira	0.044250	0.044585
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1898
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3970	2.3970
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.8330	1.8410
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1935
Greek Drachma	0.2765	0.3045

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3816/26	Canadian dollar
	1.4910/20	Deutsche marks
	1.6700/10	Dutch guilders
	1.2040/50	Swiss francs
	30.65/69	Belgian francs
	5.1197/47	French francs
	1604.0/5.5	Italian lire
	106.71/81	Japanese yen
	6.9370/70	Swedish crowns
	6.5310/60	Norwegian crowns
	5.7631/31	Danish crowns
	1.4165/75	Singapore dollars
	0.7391/96	Australian dollars
	7.7314/24	Hong Kong dollars
One sterling	\$1.5028/38	
One ounce of gold	\$406.00/406.50	



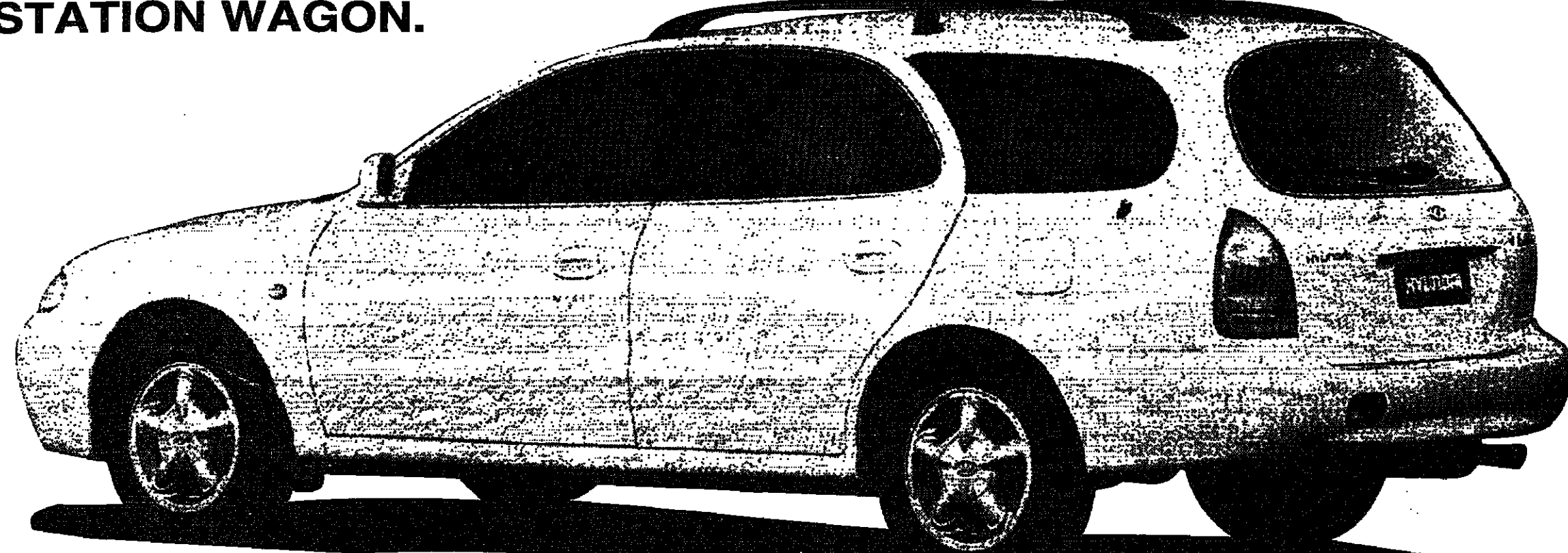
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1st Division Basketball Championship Ahli defeat Orthodoxi 90-76

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's basketball titleholder Al Ahli Thursday night proved that they were not about to give up their title easily when they scored a convincing 90-76 win over Al Orthodoxi in the first round final of the First Division Basketball Championship.

Over 3000 fans attended the match at the Sports Palace intent on watching a traditional all-time rivalry, the winner of which will greatly affect this year's eventual champion.

Both teams had their good reasons for not settling for defeat. Al Ahli had unexpectedly lost 76-73 to Al Jazireh and another defeat would have surely ended their chances for a fourth consecutive title.

Al Orthodoxi on the other hand were leading the standings after Al Ahli's defeat and a win would have bolstered their chances for the title they had won from 1976-1989 and last won in 1991.

After Al Ahli's win Thursday the top three teams have now all been beaten once each and the results of their second round matches and the final match of the competition on Feb. 15 will all have a bearing on the final standings.

In Thursday's match fans at first thought the match would go either way as scoring remained close. However, Al Ahli took control of the match and were able to come out winners as experience and a lineup proved to be the decisive factors which enabled them to take a 21-point lead before sealing the match with a win.

Yousef Zaghloul secured his team's win by netting 23 points. Ramez Hammoudeh also played one of his matches with 19 points.

Al Orthodoxi's Hilal Barakat was the match's top scorer with 24 points. Al Ahli led 12-5 and 16-9 before Al Orthodoxi were able to catch up at 23-22 with five three-pointers by Hilal Barakat and promising playmaker Fadi Saqqa.

Al Orthodoxi then took



Yousef Zaghloul

their first lead at 24-23 in the 13th minute. With Ihab Msih scoring and the agile Mahmoud Sha'ban netting another three-pointer Al Orthodoxi took their biggest lead of the match at 34-30 as they narrowed Al Ahli's scoring ability with a tight defence especially by guarding usual scorer Marwan Ma'touq.

Realising that their rivals were now taking the lead Al Ahli stepped up their momentum and by securing defensive rebounding they outscored Al Orthodoxi 14-5 as Ramez Hammoudeh and Yousef Zaghloul scored to end the first half 44-39 for Al Ahli.

At the beginning of the second half Al Ahli scored ten consecutive points including two three-pointers by sharpshooters Zaghloul and Ma'touq to lead 54-39.

Al Orthodoxi then scored eight points and seemed able to narrow the gap for the last time before Al Ahli's playing strategy and Orthodoxi's incoherent lineup played a decisive factor.

Al Ahli's Hammoudeh excelled in rebounding and scoring for his team despite showing strains of a possible leg injury which seemed to slow him down.

Together with Marwan Saeedi and Zaghloul, Hammoudeh expanded his team's lead to 73-57 as only veteran Hilal Barakat and Muntaser Abultayyeb, their team's best scorers, saved their teammates from a bigger scoring gap.

Al Orthodoxi had entered the match and competition vying to snatch the title from Al Ahli, but they seemed unable to convert a



Hilal Barakat

victory and rather only trying to catch up. The absence from their lineup of players like playmaker Jihad Saliba and of captain now turned coach Murad Barakat weighed heavily on the team. Hilal seemed incapable of shutting down Al Ahli's scorers with the help of his new under-18 teammates playing their inaugural first division championship.

Al Orthodoxi's players missed their shots and seemed to lack concentration as they depended on individual efforts rather than concerted teamwork — a fact that enabled Al Ahli's Zaghloul to net ten consecutive points as Al Ahli took their biggest lead to 21 points at 81-60.

While Fadi Saqqa scored for Al Orthodoxi, teammates Barakat and Abultayyeb tried to improve their team's score but Zaghloul and Hammoudeh continued to score and ended the match with an important 90-76 win.

Based on scoring average, Al Ahli lead the standings, while Al Jazireh are second. Al Orthodoxi are third for the first time in 20 years.

Al Jilil are fourth while winless Al Watani are fifth. Al Abbasi became the team to be relegated after they pulled out prior to the start of the championship.

The second round of the competition will start Tue. Jan. 30 when Al Jilil take on Al Jazireh and Al Watani meet Al Ahli.

The top scorers were:
Al Ahli: Yousef Zaghloul 23, Ramez Hammoudeh 19, Marwan Matouq 15, Marwan Saeedi 13, Mohammad Shamali 11, Riyad Ayasa 5, Wisam Nino 4.

Al Orthodoxi: Hilal Barakat 24, Muntaser Abultayyeb 14, Fadi Saqqa 12, Ihab Msih 11, Mahmoud Sha'ban 9, Ziyad Nabulsi 2.

Earlier Al Jazireh scored a big win of 100-59 over last-placed Al Watani, after totally taking control of the match and expanding their lead from 25-14 to winning the first half 56-17. Al Jazireh's coach gave substitute and young bench players a chance in the second half during which Al Watani had the chance to improve their score.

After Thursday night's results and the conclusion of the first round of the competition Al Ahli, Al Orthodoxi and Al Jazireh are tied with 7 points each after each team lost one match.

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STANDINGS AFTER 1ST round

	P	W	L	SF	SA	PTS
Ahli	4	3	1	360	247	7
Jazireh	4	3	1	302	244	7
Orthodoxi	4	3	1	361	271	7
Jilil	4	1	3	228	273	5
Watani	4	-	4	222	438	4

Cowboys poised to win 3rd Super Bowl in four years

TEMPE, Arizona (R) — In the Super Bowls of the 1970s, the Dallas Cowboys were "America's team" and the Pittsburgh Steelers invincible.

For Sunday's 30th Super Bowl at Sun Devil Stadium, the Steelers are longshot underdogs while much of America would like to see the cocky Cowboys fall flat on their facemasks. The Cowboys are still revered in the Lone Star State, where football is practically a religion. And they remain extremely popular here in the Valley of the Sun.

But an insufferable arrogance among some of the players and an owner with an ego the size of Texas has turned the Cowboys into the team many football fans love to hate.

"I have the research to prove it," said Dallas' renegade owner Jerry Jones. "We're the most loved team in the league and the most loathed."

Dallas disappointed thousands of football fans across the United States by wearing down the sentimental favourites from Green Bay and their MVP quarterback Brett Favre, 38-37, for the NFC championship.

Now it falls to the Pittsburgh Steelers to take the swagger out of the Cowboys.

The Steelers exercised the demands of last year's devastating final play defeat in the AFC championship with a heart-stopping 20-16 victory over the Cinderella Indianapolis Colts two weeks ago.

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Weah sets aim for '98

JOHANNESBURG (R) — World Footballer of the Year George Weah has vowed to continue his international career and lead Liberia to a possible place in the 1998 World Cup finals.

The Liberian captain said on Friday, the day after his team were knocked out of the Africa Nations' Cup, he had had change of heart and would continue his career with the lone stars.

"I have changed my mind and decided to go on with the team and look to qualify for the next World Cup and the next Nations' Cup finals," he told reporters.

Earlier in the week, the AC Milan striker lashed out at his Football Association and government for their lack of financial support for the team.

Grizzlies beat Raptors in OT

TORONTO (R) — The veteran Byron Scott scored half of his 16 points in overtime and rookie Bryant "big country" Reeves had 25 as the Vancouver Grizzlies beat the Toronto Raptors 106-101 to even their cross-Canada expansion-team rivalry.

Greg Anthony had 22 points and nine assists and Blue Edwards added 17 points for Vancouver, which won for the fourth time in six games and avenged its loss to Toronto in the first meeting of the expansion clubs in Vancouver.

"I think the guys look for me," Scott said. "I've been delivering all my life."

"We all know what it takes to win now," Reeves said. "We're playing well together. Now that I'm getting more playing time, my confidence is high."

"It's a satisfying win because they came to our place and beat us. And for us to come in here and even things up between us expansion teams is satisfying."

Rookie Damon Stoudamire had 22 points and 12 assists and Oliver Miller had 21 points and 13 rebounds for Toronto, which had its modest two-game winning streak snapped and fell to 10-13 at home.

In Dallas, Terry Mills scored a season-high 24 points and Allan Houston hit a short jumper with 1.9 seconds left to lift the surging Detroit Pistons to a 93-92 win over the Mavericks.

Houston and Otis Thorpe each finished with 20 points for Detroit, which won in the closing seconds for the second straight night. The Pistons have won 12 of their last 17 games.

The game-winner came when the Pistons called timeout after winning a jump ball between Houston and Jim Jackson. Joe Dumars in-

Houston humbled in NBA horror shot

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Hakeem Olajuwon and the Houston Rockets hit rock bottom here Thursday, but that might be reason for the rest of the National Basketball Association to fear the two-time defending champions.

The Rockets were horrible in a 120-85 loss here Thursday to Washington, a struggling team with only nine players available and three starters out with injuries.

Houston missed 58 of 86 shots, including 15 of 18 three-pointers. The Rockets were outrebounded 56-40 and allowed the most points to a foe this season. They trailed 71-48 at half-time and got no closer afterwards.

"If we played like that every night, we would have one of the worst records in the league," Olajuwon said. "We have to pick it up, work harder and put it back together. We have to start thinking about basketball."

"There is no excuse. If you're a championship team, you don't want to be losing all these games, especially on

the road."

But such has been the pattern in Houston's title runs. Just when they are ready to be counted out, they rise up and keep winning, as when they survived five must-win games to capture the 1995 playoffs.

"There are always some off nights. But we play well when it matters most," Houston veteran Clyde Drexler said.

The Rockets (28-15) have lost four of their past five games and seven of the past 12. Last year in late January, they dropped five of seven contests. And two years ago, the Rockets slumped to 4-7 over a similar span.

"There are going to be a couple of thorough built-kickings this year and this was one of them," Houston coach Rudy Tomjanovich said. "As a team we did not respond to their energy and execution."

The Rockets suffered their worst loss to the Bulls since a 156-114 defeat in their 1968 inaugural season, four years before the club moved from San Diego to Texas.

It was Houston's worst loss since a 120-82 defeat at Portland last February. A week later, the Rockets traded for Drexler and he helped them reclaim the NBA throne.

Now the crown rests uneasily. Again.

"We have six games before the All-Star break and we have a lot to do," Drexler said. "We looked like a tired basketball club. Hopefully we will come out stronger, faster, learn from it and not let it happen again."

The victory was the eighth-largest in Bulls' history and gave Washington a 20-21 record, their best mid-season mark since 1987. They matched a club record by sinking 12 three-point shots.

Washington's Brent Price scored 25 points, sinking 6-of-10 three-point shots, and added nine rebounds and eight assists. Calbert Cheaney added 20 points while Romanian giant Gheorghe Muresan had 17 points and 13 rebounds. Seven Bulls scored at least 11 points.



Atlanta Hawks forward Alan Henderson shoots for two under heavy defensive pressure from the Miami Heat's Pete Myers (left) and Kurt Thomas (Reuters photo)

McCloud finished with 23 points and Jackson had 18 for Dallas, which had won three of its previous four games.

At Washington, Brent Price scored 25 points and Calbert Cheaney added 20 to pace seven players in double figures as the Bulls raced to a 23-point halftime lead en route to a 120-85 demolition of the Houston Rockets (see separate story).

In Los Angeles, rookie Brent Barry hit a running five-footer in the lane with 1.7 seconds left to lift the

Clippers to a 94-93 victory over the Denver Nuggets, snapping a four-game losing streak.

Loy Vaught had 26 points and 13 rebounds and Terry Dehere added 18 points for Los Angeles, which defeated Denver for the third time this season and fifth straight time overall.

Antonio McDyeess had 23 points and 13 rebounds and Dale Ellis added 19 for the Nuggets, who have lost six straight games and eight of 11.

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U-18 women's basketball team beats Ahli on OT

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN—Jordan's Under-18 women's national basketball team Friday scored their first victory 59-57 in a friendly match against Ahli Jub's team.

Playing their second match since starting practice at the beginning of the month, the U-18 team showed they were improving and adapting to another's style.

The matches will help their coach to narrow down the number from 20 to 15 after an initial lineup was chosen from over 39 players who attended national team trials since the beginning of the month.

The new team lost to the kingdom's reigning champions Al Jazireh 38-20 last week. They are scheduled to play Al Orthodoxi next week.

The U-18 team beat Al Ahli 30-18 in the first half, they kept their lead throughout the second half but Al Ahli, led by Sirra Naghaway and Tetyana Qardan, were able to narrow the gap and tie the score 53-53 forcing overtime.

Hala Ghattas and Lubna Asri led the newly-formed U-18 team to a slim but morale-boosting victory over

one of the country's three women's teams.

It is the first time in Jordanian basketball that a women's Under-18 team is formed. The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) initiated the idea late last year hoping to start a junior team by participating in the 13th Asian Junior Women's Championship due to be held in Bangkok, Thailand April 21-28.

The initial lineup of 20 players mostly represent Ahli, Orthodoxi and Jazireh clubs. They are Samar Makusi, Nadine Kishkesh, Maryam Ta'ani, Randa Sayegh, Zina Farah, Hala Ghattas, Natasha Abatha, Lubna Masri, Samar Banna, Yara Kheir, Tala Fakhouri, Hiba Muheisen, Ruwa Hijazi, Sirsa Abatha, Safa Sahouri, Azza Nabulsi, Ellen Shaddad, Anoud Srouji, Lama Abu Judum and Dana Dallal.

The JBF seems intent on reviving women's basketball in the country. Last year the senior women's national team was regrouped after a 12-year absence. The team took part in the 16th Asian Basketball Championship in Shizuoka, Japan in July 1995 becoming the first and only Arab team to do so.

African Nations Cup

Deadly strikers come face to face

LOEMFONTEIN (AFP) — The deadliest finishers in the African Nations Cup came face to face here Saturday night when Zambia confronted Egypt in the quarter-finals.

Zambian captain Kalusha Bwalya, at 32 one of the oldest footballers at the tournament, snatched five goals against Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone to help his country win Group B on goal difference from Algeria.

And Egyptian captain Ahmad Al Kass, another veteran in an event where many competitors had no right to include, shaving his long hair, has scored the net three times.

His most important came in only seven minutes against South Africa in Johannesburg on Wednesday. It ensured the Pharaohs of second place behind the hosts of the Group of Death.

After a disappointing outing against Algeria, midfielder Bwalya stamped his mark on the biennial African showcase with a series of stunning goals from his cultured left foot.

Where many footballers

their presence felt, Bwalya prefers a chisel, delicately chipping shots into the net from various distances and angles.

The best was his second against Sierra Leone as the ball rose sufficiently to beat the desperate leap of an defender, then suddenly dipped to avoid the crossbar.

Al Kass relies on stealth and speed, ghosting unmarked into the penalty area against Angola to score twice while his pace off the mark enabled him to catch South Africa napping.

Bwalya conceded that Al Kass poses the biggest threat, saying the Pharaohs are a good team, but that their slightly-built midfielder maestro is in a class of his own.

Zambia defeated Egypt 1-0 four years ago in the only previous Nations' Cup clash and another close encounter seems likely at the 38,000-capacity Free State Stadium.

Dane Roald Poulsen, the Zambian coach, was giving nothing away Friday, but is expected to retain the vastly experienced team which started against the Leone Stars.

Seles goes for 4th Australian title

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Anke Huber will have to pull out the match of her life here Saturday to stop Monica Seles winning her first Grand Slam title since recovering from a stabbing attack.

For the 21-year-old German, yet to realise her full potential, it is her first Grand Slam final in 24 tournaments. She is up against a magical performer playing in her 49th career final. Seles has won eight grand Slam crowns — three of them Australian — and is a tennis legend at the age of 22.

After an almost 28-month absence following the attack by a crazed fan in Hamburg in April 1993, Seles returned to win 11 consecutive matches before losing the U.S. Open final to Steffi Graf last September.

Graf did not compete in the Australian Open. Throughout her career Seles has won all of her 27 matches in the Australian Open. She won her first title of the year at the Sydney International tournament in the week prior to the Australian Open.

This big-hearted player pulled off one of the great escapes of tennis on Thursday to retain her unbeaten record. She clawed back to

win against young American Chanda Rubin in the semi-finals after losing the first set and being 2-5 down in the third.

Close to tears after coming back from the brink, Seles said she was lucky to win.

She has been playing in Grand Slams since 1990, but her record since making the semi-finals at Roland Garros in 1993 has been patchy, failing to advance beyond the fourth round each time.

In 1994 her game threatened to fall apart and she came close to quitting, but her parents persuaded her to soldier on. She regrouped and ended 1995 going down to Graf in a five-set classic at the season-ending WTA Championship.

The athletic German is fit and vigorous and can mix top spin and lobs with searing drives. But she had difficulty disposing of speedy and persistent South African Amanda Coetzer in a three-set semi-final.

Seles has won all six of their encounters in straight sets, including two matches since her comeback, and there seems little reason why she should not secure a fourth Australian crown on Saturday.

Biographies of Open finalists

Monica Seles (United States),

Age: 22

Seeded: One

Career official prize-money: \$7.8 million

Singles titles: Eight Grand Slam titles, 34 overall

Coach: her father, Karol

Grand Slam titles: Australian Open in 1991, 1992 and 1993, French Open in 1990, 1991 and 1992, U.S. Open in 1991 and 1992.

Route to final: Beat Janet Lee (U.S.) 6-3, 6-0, Katarina Stadenikova (Slovakia) 6-1, 6-1, Julie Halard-Decugis (France) 7-5, 6-0, Naoko Sawamatsu (Japan) 6-1, 6-3, 7-6, Majoli (Croatia) 6-1, 6-2, Chanda Rubin (U.S.) 6-7, (2-7), 6-1, 7-5.

Playing style: A left-hander, Seles hits two-handed on both her forehand and backhand. An aggressive player who likes to grab control of a match from the first point, she is known for taking the ball early and hammering it down the wings of the court. Seles' never-say-die attitude and her tactical acumen make her one of the game's finest players.

Anke Huber (Germany)

Age: 21

Seeded: Eight

Career official prize-money: \$2.02 million

Singles titles: No Grand Slams, nine overall

Coach: Zoltan Kuhavszky

Grand Slam record: French Open semifinalist 1993, Australian Open quarter-finalist 1991 and 1992, reached the fourth round of all four Grand Slam tournaments last year.

Route to the final: Beat Sandra Kleinova (Czech Republic) 6-1, 6-4, Asa Carlsson (Sweden) 6-1, 6-2, Ludmila Richterova (Czech Republic) 6-2, 6-1, Barbara Schett (Austria) 6-3, 6-2, Conchita Martinez (Spain) 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, Amanda Coetzer (South Africa) 4-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Playing style: A big server and solid baseliner with a powerful double-handed backhand, Huber can hit stunning winners. The right-hander's game relies more on power from the back of the court and on wearing down her opponent than on clever volleying and tactics, but she can be erratic.

readers!

As declarer, bear in mind that the players to your right and left are sometimes imbued with the spirit of giving, as long as you present them with the opportunity to come to your aid.

This deal is from a team match. In one room South declared four spades and, despite the friendly lead of the jack of hearts and a combined 26 points, could muster no more than nine tricks. In the other room the auction went as shown.

A low diamond lead would have settled the matter there and then in favor of the defense, but here, too, the jack of hearts was the choice. Had declarer called for the queen, East would have covered with the king and declarer could win with

the ace. A low heart then would have established a ninth trick for declarer. However, South was sure that the defenders would then find the diamond shift which would have defeated the contract.

Instead, declarer elected to rely on the assistance of the defenders with an innocent deceptive maneuver. South played low from dummy, allowing the jack to win an East signaled that a rich vein had been struck. West continued with a low heart. Dummy's eight fetched the king from East, and declarer now had two heart tricks and nine in all.

Yes, we can think of all sorts of reasons why West should shift as trick two. However, we are not sure we would have at the table!

Chang powers into final as Andre runs out of gas

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Winning his way into the Australian Open tennis final was sweet for Michael Chang here Friday — not only did he whitewash his tormentor Andre Agassi, but it gave him an opportunity to address a seven-year Grand Slam drought.

Chang swept aside defending champion Agassi to claim his third Grand Slam final appearance, and for the sixth match in a row here he did it without conceding a set.

The laconic fifth seed achieved one of his most emphatic victories over Agassi, nailing the flamboyant American with seven consecutive points in a deciding set tiebreaker to clinch a 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (7-1) victory in two hours eight minutes.

Chang is trying to live down his one-off Grand Slam title reputation after his 1989 French Open breakthrough triumph, when he was the youngest Grand Slam champion in history at 17 years three months.

Chang, who was tipped out of last year's semi-finals by Pete Sampras, will take on Germany's fourth seed Boris Becker, who outclassed unseeded Australian Mark Woodforde, 6-4, 6-2, 6-0 in 98 minutes.

Agassi, dilled by a laden number of games in the lead-up to Friday's semi-including three five-set tussles, complained of the buffeting wind and lethargy, as Chang, spending four and a half hours less on court than Agassi on the road to the semi-final, looked the fresher.

Agassi toiled for 203 games to reach the semi-finals. Chang played 128, a difference of 75 games, so in effect, opponents, Gaston Etlis, Vince Spadea, Steve Bryan, Jonas Bjorkman and Courier all contributed to the new world No.1 downfall Friday.

"It's a great confidence booster for me to have a win like this, because Andre over the years and even in the junior years has beaten me most of the time and this is the first time I have ever beaten him in a major," he said.

"Andre can raise his game when he wants to and a few times during today's match he just hit some unbelievable shots and I just had to bear down and stay with him and concentrate on what I do best."

"Andre wasn't playing his best today, I'm not sure whether that is the way I played him today or because of the other factors involving his matches with (Jim) Courier or maybe it was the

wind."

Agassi, who swept through last year's Open, dropping only one set along the way, ended a run of 12 unbeaten matches at Flinders Park, and although he regained the world No. 1 in the shakeup of Sampras' third round defeat, he leaves here without what he wanted most — his fourth Grand Slam title.

Agassi, who went into Friday's semi-final of Chang's apparent indifference to playing Davis Cup for his country, gave grudging praise for his worthy rival.

"I think anybody at 5ft 9in (1.75 metres) who hangs around No. 5 in the world for a few years is worth a lot of respect, professionally at least, it's not an easy thing to do out there and he's found a way to do it," he said.

"You have to make up for it with a lot of speed and determination, and he has both of those."

Chang was foxy about a number of visits a trainer made court-side to treat an injury during the match.

Asked if it was abdominal, Chang skirted around it, saying: "Something around that area, so I have a day to take care of it, so I hope it won't be a problem... I just felt a little something and maybe I just overextended for one shot or something."

Agassi, who had to battle to overcome long-time rival Jim Courier in over three hours, said of his arduous buildup: "I came into this tournament not in ideal circumstances and I felt like through it I've managed to get my game to a place where I felt like I was playing real well."

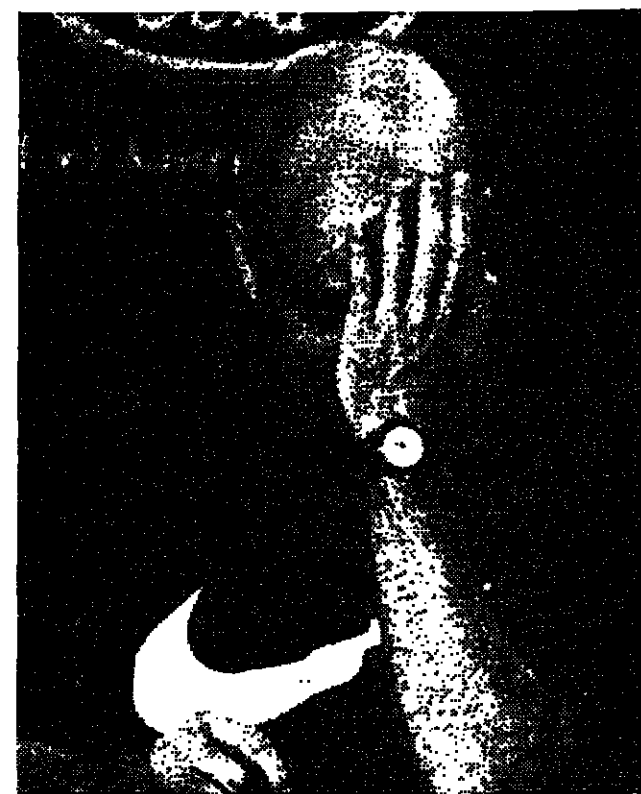
"And to play 22-odd sets before you're even in the semis, it's quite a lot of tennis, so I don't feel as bad knowing that it just built up so much."

Becker bulldozes Woodforde

Boris Becker is playing so well even God could not take a set off him; said a rueful Mark Woodforde after the German bulldozed him out of the Australian Open here Friday.

The 28-year-old Becker, hungry for another Grand Slam title after a four-year fast, overwhelmed the 30-year-old Australian with fluent power tennis 6-4, 6-2, 6-0 in a 98 minute semi-final.

His opponent in Sunday's final is fast moving American Michael Chang who toppled a lethargic defending champion Andre Agassi in straight sets, 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (7-1) in the other qualifier.



World No. 1 and defending champion Andre Agassi of the U.S. pauses during his press conference after his semi-final loss to compatriot Michael Chang at the Australian Open in Melbourne (Reuters photo)



Boris Becker's wife, Barbara, applauds her husband after his semi-final win over Australia's Mark Woodforde at the Australian Open in Melbourne (Reuters photo)



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The Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Jordan seeks qualified candidates for a vacant post as journalist. This journalist will be expected to:

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- 9) Carry out any other information-related support function that may be assigned to him/her from time to time by the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Jordan.

Qualifications: Applicants must (a) be citizens of Jordan, (b) have completed formal training at a recognized school of journalism in Jordan or abroad, (c) have at least 3-5 years of working experience in the Jordanian mass media (radio, television, or newspapers) or in the field of public relations, and (d) speak and write both Arabic and English fluently.

Candidates interested in this position are requested to submit their applications (incl. a complete curriculum vitae and copies of two Arabic-language plus two English-language articles or feature stories authored by them) no later than 7 February 1996 in a sealed envelope clearly marked "JOURNALIST" to:

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Or hand-deliver it to the receptionist in the UNDP office, Hrbawi Building, Obadah Ibn Al-Samit street, Shmeisani, Amman.

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Muslims and Serbs agree to free prisoners

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — All Bosnian prisoners of war are to be released, incoming Bosnian Premier Hasan Muratovic and the "speaker" of the Bosnian Serb "parliament," Momcilo Krajisnik said here Friday.

"We have agreed to release all the prisoners from the list we received from the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross)," Mr. Muratovic said during joint press conference at Sarajevo airport.

Friday's agreement was a major breakthrough in implementing the U.S.-brokered Dayton peace accord, whose signing in Paris six weeks ago ended the nearly four-year war.

The former belligerents breached the accord last Friday when they failed to honour a deadline for full release of prisoners.

The Serbs had earlier announced they would free all their detainees on Saturday. For his part Mr. Muratovic indicated the release date for Bosnian-held prisoners would be announced following a meeting of the collective presidency late Friday. He said he thought this would be soon.

The Croats have previously agreed to a full prisoner release but it was not possible to confirm that they agreed with Friday's Muslim-Serb accord.

A Spanish peace Implementation Force (IFOR) officer told AFP that the Croats had announced they would free Saturday 127 Serb prisoners from Mostar in the southeast to be brought to Sarajevo.

In Vienna, Bosnia's factions agreed to confidence-building measures, including inspections of each other's weapons and troops, after three weeks of talks mediated by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in Europe.

"There has been an agreement," an OSCE official said. A document was scheduled to be signed later on Friday by representatives of the Muslim-led Bosnian government, the Bosnian-Croat federation and the Bosnian Serbs.

Three weeks ago agreement was clinched at the talks from the Bosnian-Croat federation and the Bosnian Serbs to set up military liaison offices in Sarajevo.

The negotiations were part of a series of follow-up talks laid down in the peace agreement on Bosnia, which specified that the confidence-building measures had to be agreed by Jan. 26.

Separate arms reductions talks involving the Bosnian factions, Croatia and rump Yugoslavia have also been taking place under OSCE auspices in Vienna. They must

conclude by June 6.

Friday's accord will allow the federation and the Serbs to check each others' data on weapons sites, troop numbers and arms factories. It also requires each side to inform the other of significant troop movements as part of measures to reduce the risk of renewed fighting in Bosnia.

NATO's top decision-making body meanwhile approved an escape clause with U.N. troops set to be deployed in Croatia's eastern Slavonia, promising to help them if they decide to pull out of the contested region.

A diplomat said the ambassador-level NATO council agreed to a request for support from Belgium, which is due to command the peacekeepers there.

Essentially, it means the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation will lend its "support" if the U.N. troops decide an "urgent withdrawal" becomes necessary.

Around 5,000 peacekeepers are to be sent to the region, the last Serb-held area of Croatia, where its main task will be to supervise disarmament of Serb militias and the return to Croatian refugees.

The United Nations says the force will not be totally operational before the end of April or early May, at the earliest.

Meanwhile Belgium sent General Jozef Schoups to Eastern Slavonia on Friday on a five-day reconnaissance mission. He is expected to head the force there.

Russia has already agreed to send troops to the region and talks are going on with a number of other countries to do the same.

Gen. Schoups' nomination to lead the U.N. force was welcomed Friday by Croatian Defence Minister Gojko Susak, the state Hina news agency said.

Outgoing Bosnian Premier Haris Silajdzic meanwhile warned that Bosnia's troubled Muslim-Croat federation will explode if the two sides fail to surmount bitter differences and reunite the key city of Mostar.

"If Mostar remains divided, Bosnia will be forever, because a divided Mostar means a divided Bosnia is impossible," Mr. Silajdzic said in an interview published in the independent Vreme weekly.

The southern city was the theatre of appalling violence during a year-long bloody war between Muslims and Croats from May 1993 to March 1994.

Reunification of Mostar, currently under European Union administration, is considered the cornerstone of Bosnia's post-war institutions enshrined in the Dayton peace accords.

IAEA denies engineer worked at Iraqi plant

VIENNA (AFP) — The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) denied Friday that a German engineer accused of secretly helping Iraq mount a nuclear programme for military purposes had actually helped build a weapons plant in Baghdad.

The agency's comments followed a report in the mass circulation German daily newspaper Bild on Thursday which said a worldwide hunt had been launched for the nuclear engineer.

The paper said the IAEA believed the man had supplied top-secret plans for the making of atomic weapons to the regime of Saddam Hussein.

It said that in the late 1980s, the man worked for the German-Dutch-British firm URENCO which specialised in building uranium enrichment equipment for the making of nuclear fuels for peaceful purposes.

But after leaving that company he founded another, which supplied construction plans for gas-centrifuge equipment which he had copied and smuggled into Iraq.

The report said he also travelled to Baghdad under a false name and helped with the work in secret Iraqi plants for the building of the centrifuge equipment, used to make atomic weapons.

But on Friday, IAEA spokesman David Kyd said the engineer could not have helped in the actual building of the equipment.

"On the other hand, he could have transported components of the centrifuge equipment, which resemble pieces of pipe," he said.

"The Iraqis had not started to build a research factory and the components recovered show they had not yet reached an experimental stage," he said.

The spokesman said Iraq had planned to build 50 gas-centrifuges in the Baghdad suburbs initially and up to 200 others elsewhere for enriching uranium to use in atomic weapons.

The Bildt report said the man was believed to have fled to Brazil. It said it knew his identity and he was from Kaufbeuren, in Bavaria.

According to Bild, the man's activity was discovered thanks to the defection of President Saddam's son-in-law Hussein Kamel to Jordan last August, as a result of which a quantity of Iraqi documents fell into IAEA hands.

An IAEA spokesman in Vienna on Thursday confirmed the agency had received documents indicating the man transmitted technology on uranium enrichment techniques to Iraq and that the agency had passed them to the German government.

According to Bild, the federal prosecutor had issued an arrest warrant for the nuclear engineer on a charge of treason for betraying state secrets, but the prosecutor's office in Karlsruhe refused to confirm or deny this.



FRIDAY PRAYERS: Palestinian women pass an armed Israeli policeman who oversees Palestinians entering the Old City to attend Friday prayers, the first during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Some 160,000 Moslems went to pray at Al Aqsa mosque, one of the holiest sites in Islam, even though Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank were prevented or restricted by the Israeli security forces from traveling into Jerusalem for the prayers (see page one) (Reuter photo)

Israel to pay family of Moroccan killed by Mossad

OSLO (AFP) — Israel has agreed to pay undisclosed compensation to the family of a Moroccan-born waiter killed in Norway 22 years ago by suspected Israeli agents who mistook him for a Palestinian, lawyers for both sides said Friday.

But Israel declined to apologise for the killing of Ahmad Bouchiki in 1973 in the city of Lillehammer.

"The parties have agreed on financial compensation to everyone's satisfaction," said a press release issued by lawyers representing the family and the Israeli government.

"The Israeli representative expressed his deep-felt sorrow over Ahmad Bouchiki's death, but did not offer an official apology," the statement added.

The damages are to be paid to the widow and daughter of Bouchiki. The Israeli lawyer, Amnon Goldenberg, was to hold separate talks with lawyers for Bouchiki's son.

Bouchiki, resident of Norway, was shot and killed by suspected Israeli agents who allegedly mistook him for Ali Hassan Salameh, a Palestinian wanted by Israel for his role in the killing of 12 Israeli athletes during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, Germany.

Norway broke its official silence on the case earlier this month, demanding that Israel recognise its role in the slaying and pay compensation to the family.

But Israel has steadfastly refused to take responsibility for the killing.

Earlier this month Prime Minister Shimon Peres ruled out ever acknowledging a role in the murder, saying: "Israel will never take responsibility, because Israel is not a killing organisation."

"As a country, we never took it upon ourselves to go into the business of killing, or to accept responsibility if somebody accuses us of killing," he said.

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It did not say how many people were arrested.

The statement said an Interior Ministry official warned "those who are carrying out these incidents that are aimed at destabilising security" and "urged them not to use any religious sermons to fan the riots."

The arrests were part of the latest crackdown in Bahrain, where two out of three members of the indigenous population are Shi'ite Muslims, and the Sunni-dominated government has threatened martial law to deal with the protests.

Palestinian women did not gain much in self-rule vote

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinian women activists and politicians voiced qualified satisfaction Friday with historic elections in which five women were elected to the new 88-member self-rule council.

But they also stressed the Jan. 20 polling, which featured a high turnout by women voters, pointed up the need to ensure more women are elected in the future by guaranteeing them seats.

"It is only a first step," Hanan Ashrawi, elected in the Jerusalem district, told a press conference in East Jerusalem. "It is insufficient and I had hoped more women would gain seats but I also believe this is part of an ongoing empowerment process."

The other women to win were Dalal Salameh, from Balata refugee camp near Nablus and Intissar Wazir, Jamila Saidan and Rawiya Shaw, all from the Gaza Strip. Forty-two per cent of the total number of voters

were women. "With five women, now we will have a watch inside the council," said Zuheira Kamal, who narrowly lost in the Jerusalem contest.

But Ghada Zughayer, of the Jerusalem Centre for Women, stopped just short of terming the results a setback.

"Having five women in the council is a positive achievement, but it is insufficient. It is a lower percentage than in the Palestinian National Council," she said.

All three women advocated a quota system for future municipal and national elections, with Ms. Kamal suggesting women should from now on have a guaranteed representation of thirty per cent.

Dr. Ashrawi said: "Affirmative action is necessary as a temporary measure to even the playing field... I know from experience it is extremely difficult for women to make a place for themselves in politics."

Dr. Ashrawi said she

would work in the council on a variety of issues, including peace negotiations with Israel and the economy.

She plans to back legislation to benefit women in two spheres: compulsory education through secondary school, and raising to 18 the minimum marriage age.

She is also pressing for the creation of a department dealing with women's issues inside Arafat's executive "to monitor and intervene at all levels to prevent exclusion and discrimination."

Ms. Zughayer said, however, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat does not seem interested in women's rights. "Whenever we started discussing the personal status laws and central issues for Palestinian women, the response was not positive at all from Yasser Arafat," she said.

"He told us he has enough attacks from Muslim fundamentalists and does not want to open another front with them," she told.

Rafsanjani camp under fire in heated row ahead of polls

TEHRAN (R) — Iranian conservatives have attacked senior government officials who have urged voters to back the president's policies in a parliamentary elections in March, accusing them of abuse of power.

Conservative groups and parliament deputies also accused the 16 centrist officials of misuse of public funds and unconstitutional acts, according to Iranian newspapers.

The officials, who include 10 ministers and four vice-presidents, last week issued a statement calling on Iranians to back President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's pragmatic policies in the March 8 elections.

"The recent statement by a number of ministers and state officials is an interference by part of the executive branch in the affairs of the legislative branch," said Assadollah

Badamchian, head of a body that approves parties and associations, quoted by the Iran Daily on Thursday.

"Using public funds and government facilities for election campaigning is illegal," Deputy Ahmad Salek told Resalat daily, referring to hundreds of publicity panels put up on Tehran buses and billboards by the group.

The pro-Rafsanjani statement was the first openly political call from the moderate camp in the run-up to the election, which has been dominated so far by conservatives who control the 270-seat parliament.

About 150 deputies have signed a statement accusing the Rafsanjani supporters of insulting the Majlis, or parliament, and demanding an apology.

The 16 officials broke ranks with the Shi'ite Muslim

Combatant Clergy Association (CCA), the main conservative group in parliament.

Mr. Rafsanjani had tried to avoid the split but he allowed his backers to launch the new centrist group after CCA leaders refused to include candidates proposed by his supporters in their election slate, newspapers said.

The new group's statement departed from the common political line in Iran that blames the country's problems on foreign powers and focused instead on internal economic woes.

It called for the election of managers and technocrats to help reconstruct the country's economy ravaged by the 1980-1988 war with Iraq and inefficient management.

Mr. Rafsanjani's economic liberalisation reforms have met resistance in parliament.

Turkey in deadlock

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey plunged deeper into political confusion Friday when the Motherland Party rejected an offer by incumbent Prime Minister Tansu Ciller to set up a coalition government with a rotating premiership.

As both sides blamed each other for the impasse, it left Turkey entering a second month of uncertainty with still no firm idea of the shape of their next government.

It also paved the way for further talks between the Motherland Party of Mesut Yilmaz and the pro-Islamic Welfare Party.

Ms. Ciller had suggested the rotating premiership in a bid to break the political impasse after elections in December in which the Welfare Party won most seats, but fell short of a majority to form a government.

She would stay prime minister for the first period of two and a half years — arguing it was only sensible as her True Path Party had won slightly more seats than Motherland — with Mr. Yilmaz following for a similar term.

But Mr. Yilmaz said his party could not enter into a coalition with True Path because it held her responsible for Turkey's problems, particularly its high inflation, unemployment and foreign debts.

Ms. Ciller, referring to the current Muslim period of fasting known as Ramadan which is traditionally a time of reconciliation, pinned the failure of talks on Motherland.

"The Motherland Party is asking too much. We made sacrifices... we held out an olive branch... but if they want more, in this period of Ramadan, I will say 'enough'," she told a news conference.

Using a sports analogy, she said True Path had beaten Motherland by 135 seats to 133 in the elections — the Welfare Party won 158 — and "despite that, we said it was a draw by offering to share power."

Her desperation to form a coalition was evident Thursday when she persuaded True Path to let a Motherland candidate become new parliament speaker.

The rejection of her offer by Motherland's executive committee confirmed a similar decision Thursday by its parliamentary group.

It said the party "will continue its efforts" to form a government. Mr. Yilmaz earlier said he would start talking to Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan if other options failed.

Ms. Ciller was asked to form the government last Friday after Mr. Erbakan failed to find a partner for a coalition to be led by him. His party opposes closer ties between Turkey and the West and backs stronger adherence to the Islamic code.

At the weekend, he said he was confident of forming a government with Motherland. "I'm laughing at Ciller's efforts, they (Ciller and Yilmaz) will never be able to agree on anything," he predicted.

Barring a quick change of heart by either side, Ms. Ciller — who has said she will not form a coalition with the Welfare Party — will be under pressure to hand in her mandate as premier from Saturday.

The daily Hurriyet reported Friday that she had already packed her bags and was preparing to leave her official residence.

Column 8

Filipino president steps in to halt scuffle

MANILA (R) — Philippine President Fidel Ramos leaped out of his car Friday to halt a scuffle between his security men and angry protesters. Witnesses said Mr. Ramos, swatting at members of his presidential security guard with a rolled up newspaper,

ordered them to stop pushing the protesters, who were blocking his departure from a national meeting on government food policies. "Leave them alone," he insisted, dashing into the middle of the

melee outside a top Manila hotel. Mr. Ramos apologised to the protesters, using a megaphone the demonstrators themselves provided, and then chatted with them for about five minutes. "If the security

men were too rough, please forgive them," Mr. Ramos told the crowd. "I apologise. They were impulsive." The scuffle began when the protesters, representing landless peasants, blocked the president's motorcade as it left the Philippine Plaza Hotel after Mr. Ramos delivered a speech. The security guards were trying to push back the protesters when Mr. Ramos intervened.

Quintuplets born to California couple

LONG BEACH, California (AFP) — A California woman made U.S. medical history this week by giving birth to five babies who are said to be the only quintuplets to be born all in good health ever in the United States. Party Shier, 35, and her husband Scot became parents of the five infants — three girls and two boys — following a C-section delivery at Long Beach Memorial Centre's Women's Hospital. The babies, born at 8 months (33 weeks), are all in good condition and breathing on their own in the wake of what the medical staff dubbed "Operation Rainbow."

"The Rainbow babies are all doing well," said Dr. Jose Perez, a neonatologist in Memorial Miller Child-ren's Hospital Infant Special Care Unit. The hospital is renowned for its high risk obstetric team. There have only been five sets of quintuplet births in California since 1980, according to the California Department of Health Services. But medical sources said the Shier babies were the only set of quintuplets to be born in the United States who have all been healthy.

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It did not say how many people were arrested.

The statement said an Interior Ministry official warned "those who are carrying out these incidents that are aimed at destabilising security" and "urged them not to use any religious sermons to fan the riots."

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